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WELCOME

ISSUE 610 JUNE 2022

Alistair Munn

Nick Manley

There's something about fishing in the surf that you don't get from other types of fishing, except perhaps salmon fishing or river fishing for trout. It's something to do with standing in the water, feeling the current against your waders, being amongst the cool, crashing, fizzing, salt with your rod in hand, waiting for the lunging bite of a bass – you really can't beat it.

This month we're celebrating surf fishing and bringing you the best of it in all its forms. Mike Thrussell explains the art of surf fishing with baits on page eight before we take you to four of the most iconic surf beaches in the UK and Ireland starting on page 21. Henry Gilbey is a self-confessed surf fishing nut and takes us on a lure fishing guide to surf fishing on page 32.

Your Mission Accomplished entries have been pouring in this month and there are some truly superb catches being made. No more so than the 100lb shore skate landed by 10-year-old Harley Thompson on a trip to the Highlands with his dad and some mates. You can read the full story of their epic trip, with shore skate breaking the 200lb barrier, on page 46.

Don't miss out on the chance to win £235 worth of Shakespeare Salt tackle with our competition on page 105. It's easy to enter and the lucky winner will walk away with a surf rod, fixed spool reel and multi rod carrier. We've also got a great new reader offer on page 118 where you can save up to £158 on three combos for summer fishing.

Those of you who go afloat will enjoy this month's boat angling section including a first look at the world's first fully electric RIB – no more dirty diesel – and the news on page 66 that the government has announced the bluefin tuna CHART catch and release tagging programme will go ahead again this year – hopefully with an expanded number of boats able to take part. Sea Angler will be covering the CHART programme later in the year so why not subscribe and make sure you read all about the UK's very big game fishing scene. Who would have thought it 10 years ago?

Finally, gurnards don't often feature heavily in Sea Angler but this month two deserve special mention. Firstly, congratulations to Nick Manley of Pontypool Sea Angling club who has caught a new British record grey gurnard while fishing aboard Spot On out of Brixham. The fish fell to a 6in blue and white Sidewinder over a mid-Channel wreck. The fish weighed 2lb 8oz 14dr beating the previous record of 2lb 7oz 8dr from 2013.

Secondly, congratulations to Alistair Munn from Weymouth who has caught a staggering 6lb 13oz tub gurnard while fishing off on Jamie Pullin's boat Offshore Rebel off Alderney. What a magnificent catch!

Until next month, tight lines.

David

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Cover picture by RYAN THOMPSON

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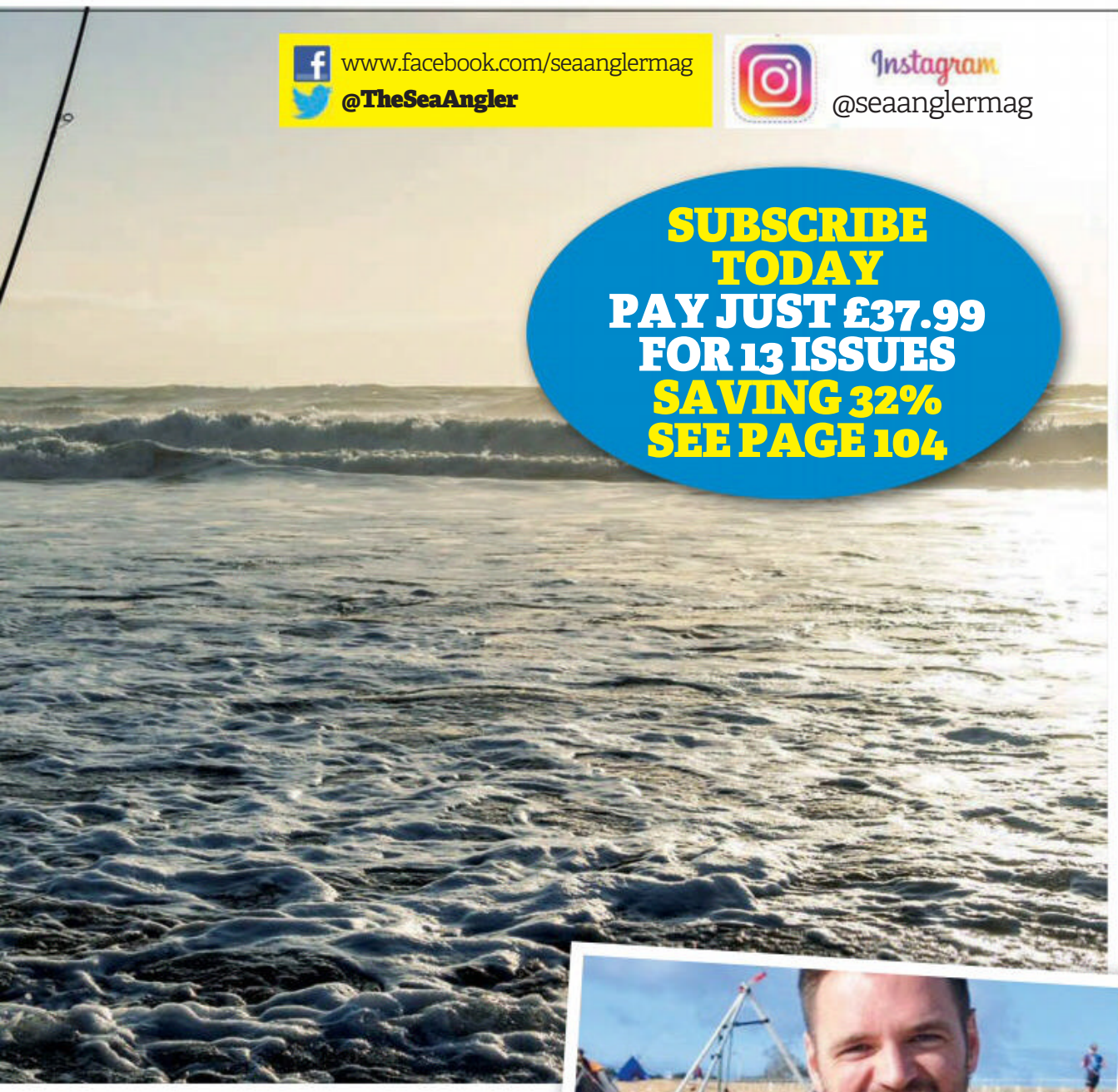

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Ryan and Harley Thompson fishing near Morecombe: Photo by Ryan Thompson

THE BIG PICTURE

SeaAngler

Words and photography by MIKE THRUSSELL

MASTER THE ART OF SURF BASS

Hold your rod and be ready to react quickly to bites

Catching bass from the surf is more of an art than a science. Mike Thrussell shares his secrets to success.

A prime Irish surf beach bass

Targeting bass in the surf was once described to me as an art form. I was only 14 or so at the time and didn't understand how accurate that statement was. What I've come to realise is that to become an art form a compilation of factors must come together to create a finished product. To be successful at surf bassing you need to break it down into its individual components then bring them back together to form the work of art.

WHEN & WHERE TO FISH

You could argue that seeking bass in the surf is a 12-month occupation, and to some extent that's true with bass being caught, especially along the western coast of the UK, throughout the year. However, we need to narrow this down to better focus our chances.

Taking a general look across the southern half of the UK and southern half of Ireland, the season really gets going in April when the bass move back inshore after spawning. May improves as the month goes on, June is excellent, but then expect a general downturn during July to mid-August when the fish tend to move out onto the offshore reefs to feed on joey mackerel and sandeel. The exception to this is if the weather is unseasonably rough in that mid-summer period. If so, the bass will move back into the surf to feed. From mid-August to December is the very best time; there's is plenty of food about and the bass are hungry preparing for the winter and the New Year's spawning.

In the south and west of the UK, as far north as the Mull of Galloway, any beach facing south, but better roughly west, will have bass on it at some stage. The east facing beaches along the East Coast of the UK can also produce, but ▶

you're dependent on easterly winds to create surf which are less frequent than winds from the Atlantic. Bear this in mind when selecting venues. You need a beach that takes a given wind direction pretty much full in the face as it's this that creates the surf tables. Beaches that only take a wind from an acute angle never produce bass in quite the same numbers as a true fully facing surf beach does.

A good place to fish on a surf beach is the corner where the sand meets the cliffs or rocks, and the wind drives in here. This roughened sea state will draw the fish in like a magnet and concentrate their efforts. If the fish are in and feeding, it's as good an opportunity as you'll ever get. Beaches that flank an estuary are always high up the list as you have the passage of fish towards the estuary on the flood tide and equally so heading back out on the ebb. Again, passing bass traffic like this almost guarantees a bite or two. Fish as close to where the estuary meets the beach, especially if there are run-off channels leading from the estuary to the beach as these will be the routes that the bass take tide after tide.

If you're fishing the open surf, look for features on the beach at low water such as gutters, scoured out holes and especially patches of rocks and boulders as these will again concentrate the bass in better numbers. Often though, the bass just run the open surf in an opportunist way looking for naive sandeel, washed out lug, shrimp, and any other food items that get disturbed by wave action.

Bass get caught from the surf by day, but if you have the choice, fish at night or when it's dark. This is when better numbers of fish will be present and often, the bigger fish show. Tides that start to flood in darkness are the best, though well worth fishing are dawn tides providing the flood begins in the dark but high water falls in daylight. The light levels during this dawn period are still low and the bass tolerate this. Bright sunshine, flattish seas and gin clear water are not conducive to consistent bass fishing.

Fishing at night will produce more fish and is often when the bigger bass will show

WEATHER PATTERNS

Understanding the weather patterns is essential to achieve what we're trying to do. Anglers who get the best from surf bassing constantly watch the weather patterns and especially the lows forming out in the Atlantic. If there has been a calm, settled, spell of weather with calm seas, then a blow is suddenly forecast, as soon as the swell from the advancing low-pressure system hits the beach the bass will move back into it. Too many anglers wait for the sea to rough up, but you're missing fish by doing so. To forecast the swell arriving, get a barometer app on your phone if you haven't got a wall barometer and watch for the barometric pressure starting to fall. That's the signal to get out there!

Wind strength is as important as the direction. Steady onshore winds of force two to force five are ideal conditions. On the average bass beach force two to force four will produce a light to moderate surf with neat long surf tables. These can fish well, though the bass tend to work around any features such as the patches of rock and might be less spread out. Force four to force six sees the surf rolling over on itself and the distance between the tables will be much shorter with steeper waves. These conditions see the bass more widely spread along the whole beach as the increased wave action digs out more natural food from the sand. If the sea has been rough for a period longer than three or four days, this can see the bass well fed, but they will continue to feed, but catches will lessen at this time.

Overcast skies can fish well, especially days when the cloud base is low and light rain is falling. Heavy rain is less good, both for us and the fish, it seems. The rainwater running into the sea off the beach gradually pushes the fish further out, and in these conditions, do the opposite to what the books tell you and belt those casts as far as you can to find the fish. At either the end of the April or December season heavy ground frosts on the exposed shallow sand at low water can keep the fish further out too. Again, long casts might be needed to reach the main feeding zone.

TIDES

If you time your fishing to coincide with the middle-sized tides rising to spring tides, then you won't go far wrong. This is the peak feeding period. Once the tides peak in height and start to drop back towards smaller neaps the numbers of bass ease off too. You'll still catch, but not to the same degree as during those rising tides.

Surf bass are fairly predictable when it comes to activity within a single tide cycle. Low water is often quoted as a top time. If you're fishing the ends of the beach or those estuary linking gullies

Low water and the early hours of the flood tide can often be the best time to fish

we mentioned, then as the tide floods into these the fish will move through, irrespective of tide height and size. In the open surf it's not strictly true as the surf activity is less then than when the tide has more power to it. The second hour of the flood can be magic when the tide really starts to pick up. The next hour and a half of the middle flood can be hit and miss on some beaches, yet fish really well on others. If the fishing goes off mid-flood tide, then expect the fish to return for the last hour and half up to high water. If the fish stay through the middle flood, then catches will ease in that last hour or so before high water.

Some beaches, but not all, will fish on the ebb. The best time is usually during the middle ebb tide hours when there is some tide run with bites easing as the tide flow lessens. This can be the ideal time to fish the channels that exit estuaries as the bass leaving the estuary will run these as a short cut to the beach using the outgoing ebb flow as an assist.

UNDERSTANDING THE SURF

Take a little time to study the incoming surf tables. If there are areas where the surf is breaking further out, these indicate shallower water and these are worth fishing when the tables are long and wide. If the surf is breaking further out in one section, this suggests deeper water closer to shore and is good spot to fish in rougher weather and especially if there is a current running parallel with the beach.

Also look for areas where bits of weed are washing on to the tide line. Also, areas where old razorfish shells or clam shells have collected. Both these indicate where a current is running near the tide line and the waves naturally wash the shells ashore.

Birds working along the surf line or over a breaking wave line a given distance for shore are also worth investigating. The birds can see the bass in the surf and will pick off anything they miss that gets forced to the surface. It used to be said that the bass are in the third set of waves from the shore. That's more typical of where the angler naturally casts to and is not necessarily indicative of where the fish normally feed. The

Bass are fairly predictable when it comes to activity within a single tide cycle. Low water is often quoted as a top time

South westerly winds create clean surf tables and excellent bass fishing conditions

bass will literally be where the food is, whether that's 20 yards from the sand, 70 yards or 125 yards if you can cast that far. It's up to you to find the perfect distance!

TACKLE & RIGS

Traditional UK bass rods rated to cast 2-4oz including bait matched to either a 6500 sized multiplier or a smaller 5000 sized fixed spool are light and powerful enough to land big bass in a wild surf and cast as far as most people are able to. On the multiplier use 15/18lb mono line with a 30lb shockleader when fishing lead weights under 3oz. On the fixed spool use 20lb braid with a 40lb braid shockleader. Fifteen-pound mono or 20lb braid are ample as bass can only run over shallow sand and there are very few snags to worry about.

If the wind is strong and the sea big, then a 4-6oz 13ft beachcaster with a PENN 525 sized type multiplier, 20lb line and a 60lb shockleader can handle the surf and any weed. A continental style 14ft rated to 175g with a fixed spool reel, 30lb braid and an 80lb shock leader does the same job.

Only one rig really works in the surf and that's a 1-hook Clipped Down rig. The length of the rig needs to be 24 inches overall, with the beads and rig swivel crimped in place 18 inches above a Gemini Clip Link. The 18-inch hook length should be made from 20lb fluorocarbon ending with a size 3/0 to 4/0 Viking pattern hook. Use a 3/0 Pennell system for bigger baits, but for normal bass sized baits up to 5 inches long, one hook is enough and presents the bait better.

Grip leads between 2oz and 3oz work best, with a 2.5oz weight just about ideal; Big enough to hold even in a good surf, but heavy enough to carry a decent sized bait out.

BAITS

In most cases, fresh blow or black lug will out fish most other baits in the surf. Try tipping black off with blow lug, or with a section of ragworm. Ragworm on its own works but can be hit and miss on some beaches, so bear this in mind. Sandeel in sections works well as it's what the bass are looking for. After rough seas, razorfish can also be very productive. Surprisingly, peeler crab is not a consistent bait over sand but is worth trying when fishing close to the beach ends near to a rocky beach feature.

Baits should be left out for no more than 10 to 15 minutes. A fresh bait oozing juices will be quickly found by the bass. If you miss a bite, leave it there for another minute then retrieve. Bass do sometimes come back to a bait in the surf, or if they are swimming in small groups another fish might take it.

TACTICS

It's important to wade out a few yards into the surf and be prepared to hold the rod and feel for bites. After casting, face the sea, tighten the line just enough to feel the lead, then for righthanded people drop the rod tip to the left side with the right hand just below the reel and the left hand comfortably up the butt. This stance should be comfy and with just tension for the rod tip to pull over slightly. The rod tip can be right at water level in calmer wave tables, but at waist height in heavier water.

Bites are quite savage with the rod tip just pulling round as the lead gets pulled out. Usually bass hook themselves like this, but retighten the line, lift the rod, and as the rod takes the weight of the fish the hook should pull home. In quieter water, you may feel a single tap as the bass takes the bait in, before the tip goes as it moves away. Wait for the rod pulling round before striking.

If you don't get instant bites, work the surf fully by casting shorter and longer. Bass will tend to be closer in the calmer it is, and further out the rougher it is, but work the distances systematically until you find the fish. Bass are often at one set distance from shore which is where the food is being turned over by the surf. Also, stay mobile and carry only what you need. If you don't get bites in one place, move downtide or uptide 200-yards and you'll often find that this gets you bites. A monopod/sand spike is better than a rod rest for this and it's more transportable, lighter, and is really only used for baiting up anyway.

If you find the lead's grip wires are pulling out in a heavy surf, carry a few short cable ties with you and wrap one of these tightly round the grip leads to turn the weight into a non-release gripper which holds well even in a good surf.

It's also worth carrying 20 and 30lb fluorocarbon hook lengths with you. If you find that 20lb is tangling in the surf tables as the bait is washed up and down, switch to 30lb and any tangles will be minimal. Twenty pound is standard though, and lets the bait behave naturally while giving a good degree of strength if you hit a bigger fish. ■

Blow lug will outfish most other baits in the surf

Use 20lb fluorocarbon for hook lengths

Using a multiplier 15lb-18lb mono is ideal

2oz-3oz grip leads are perfect in the surf

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IMAGE

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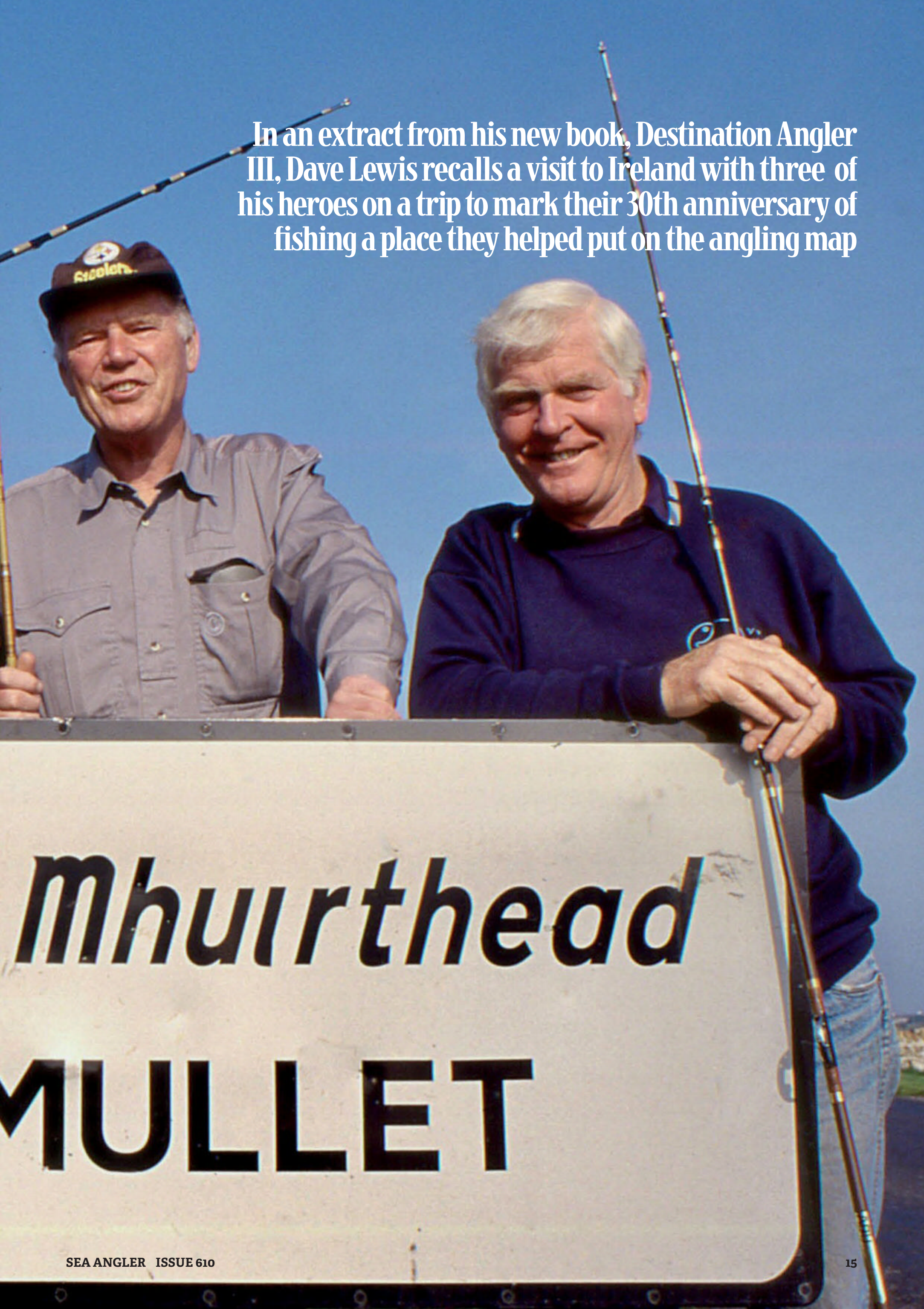
Words and photography by DAVE LEWIS

THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN!

In an extract from his new book, Destination Angler III, Dave Lewis recalls a visit to Ireland with three of his heroes on a trip to mark their 30th anniversary of fishing a place they helped put on the angling map



Father Vincent Moore stood on the end of the stone pier, looking out across Broadhaven Bay, eagerly watching as the St Christopher made her final approach into Ballyglass. For Tommy Walsh, skipper of the 21ft 'double-ender', it was the end of yet another successful day's angling. For Father Moore, it was the realisation of a dream, a vision if you like, which had resulted in the birth of the Belmullet Sea Angling Club a few years previously in 1965. As the St Christopher came to rest at her berth, the wooden fish boxes overflowing, smiling faces more than told the success story of the day.

Broadhaven Bay is an enormous expanse of sheltered water, almost an inland sea, tucked in between the mainland and the Belmullet peninsula in County Mayo, western Ireland. Back in the 1960s, tourism was still very much in its infancy and apart from agriculture, not a lot else happened in the west of Ireland. Father Moore wanted to stimulate interest in the area to boost the local economy, and he saw forming an angling club as a way of attracting much-needed tourist revenue and developing the community spirit.

One of his first steps was to contact the Irish Inland Fisheries Trust (later, the Central Fisheries Board), which sent a team to survey and promote angling by magazine articles. Initial results were so good that September 1966 saw Des Brennan, Kevin Linnane and Clive Gammon arrive in Belmullet on a fishing trip, which would ultimately establish the place as one of the top Irish boat-angling venues. Thirty years later to the day, the trio returned on a nostalgic trip to the place that they had put on the map. I had the immense pleasure and privilege of joining them.

As an angler in the 1970s, the highlight each month would be picking up the latest issue of Angling, a wonderful magazine that covered coarse, game and sea angling. It boasted a host of excellent angling writers including the inestimable Clive Gammon, who wrote a regular monthly column, with both Des Brennan and Kevin Linnane regularly contributing. Their articles invariably revealed the incredible shore and boat fishing available just a short hop across the Irish Sea. Through reading the work of these three, the seed of desire to fish in Ireland was planted in my mind, and it is hardly surprising that that Ireland was the first destination where I travelled solely to fish.

I attended a film show at a local social club, part of an annual promotional tour around the UK by the Central Fisheries Board, sometime in the early 1980s. The hall was packed. We watched several inspiring films shot at various locations throughout the previous summer, followed by talks from leading anglers, charter boat skippers and travel agents who specialised in angling holidays.

My first angling visit to Ireland and my very first destination angling trip was booked a few weeks after that evening. Several months later, I drove to Swansea with a few like-minded friends to catch the overnight ferry to Cork from where I drove further west for a week's fishing from the hallowed surf beaches and rock marks of County Kerry, about which I had read so much. That week was a life-changing experience – so much so that for the next two decades I visited and fished in Ireland at least once a year. I'd find myself fishing there three or more times a year as my career as an angling journalist gathered momentum.

Clive Gammon, a fellow Welshman, emigrated to the US in 1977 to work full-time as a sports writer on that great magazine Sports Illustrated, which at one time had a circulation of more than 20 million. He rubbed shoulders with all the world's big-name sports stars of the day, covering major sporting events such as soccer World Cups, the Olympics, Superbowl and countless boxing matches. Muhammad Ali was a personal friend. Clive's editor would often ask him to come up with a ground-breaking fishing

Clive Gammon fishing the surf of an Irish beach

Des Brennan

story for the magazine. For this, there was no limit to Clive's budget. Sports Illustrated had its own travel department and Clive travelled anywhere in the world he wanted: for a fisherman, it was the ultimate dream job. You'll find accounts of many of these trips in his books I Know A Good Place and Castaway. You will not read finer adventure angling writing.

Clive Gammon had always been one of my angling heroes. By a combination of circumstance and good luck, I answered the phone at home one day in the early 1990s to hear a mid-Atlantic accent on the other end. Clive had returned to the UK and was, I learnt, living in Kensington, west London. He had been told that I might be able to take him fishing for bass off the Welsh coast on my boat. Perhaps I'd like to travel up to London to meet up? We hit it off, and for many years I had the great pleasure of calling Clive a good friend, fishing with him throughout the UK and occasionally further afield in Namibia, South Africa and of course, Ireland.

Over the next few years, I fished Ireland with Clive on numerous occasions throughout the south and west, both offshore and from the rocks and beaches, most notably those breathtaking surf beaches of the Dingle peninsula, Co Kerry. Standing side by side with him at Stradbally, Fermoyle, Gowlane, Inch or The Wine Strand as an Atlantic swell pushed gently landwards from the west was a truly surreal experience for me. Back in the 1960s, rod maker Davenport and Fordham of Poole, Dorset, manufactured the Clive Gammon Bass Rod. It was a ground-breaking, lightweight 2-4oz rod that revolutionised surf casting, and at the end of one of our surf trips to Kerry, Clive gave me his own original CG bass rod. It remains one of my most treasured ▶

Sports Illustrated had its own travel department and Clive travelled anywhere in the world he wanted: for a fisherman, it was the ultimate dream job

The origial Clive Gammon Bass Rod

The CG Bass Rod in use with Dave Lewis

No trip to Ireland is complete without plenty of time to sample the local produce

possessions. One day Clive asked if I'd like to join him on a trip to Ballydavid, a village tucked away on the eastern shore of Smerwick harbour, a few miles outside of Dingle. Clive's son Nick lived in Ballydavid at the time and one of the locals, Sean O'Connor, had just taken delivery of a new steel-built charter boat, An Tiaracht. Sean's dad, TP, owned the local bar and B&B. Keen to promote angling packages, they had asked Nick if his father might be interested in coming over for a week. We would be joined, Clive went on to say, by a couple of old friends with whom he used to fish extensively throughout the 1960s and 70s. Yes, you've got it: Des Brennan and Kevin Linnane. This was the ultimate dream trip for me: the promise of fishing in what was then (and remains) one of my favourite angling destinations anywhere – plus a full week with three angling legends.

Clive and I were the first to reach Ballydavid, having arrived in Cork at 7am on the, sadly discontinued, overnight ferry from Swansea. Early in the afternoon, I stepped out of my room at TP's and bumped into a tall and powerfully built man who immediately held out a hand to shake. 'Ah, you must be young Dave. I've been looking forward to meeting you. Clive has told me so much about you!'

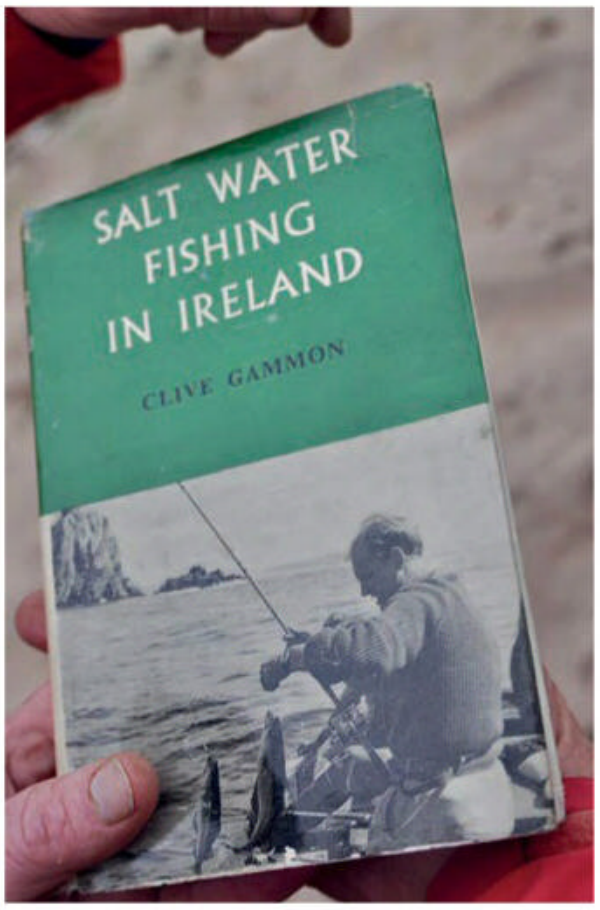
This was the first time I had met Des Brennan and I was awestruck before finally managing to stutter that I too had been very much looking forward to meeting him. I had brought several of Des's and Kevin's books hoping to get them signed, and I remember it was a huge effort to prevent myself from running back to my room and grabbing them to be signed on the spot. Thankfully, I did the right thing, which was to help Des up the stairs with his tackle and luggage. After all, I had a full week to get my books signed! Several hours later, Clive, Des and I were seated together in the bar downstairs, savouring pints of Ireland's finest when Kevin joined us.

The fishing was very good. Ballydavid is well-located to provide excellent shelter from all but strong northerly winds. Several hugely productive reefs are close to the village's stone pier, which I had seen in one of those old Central Fisheries Board promotional films when Kevin fished it for conger, while the barman of the time kept him supplied with perfectly presented pints of Guinness.

We caught huge numbers of pollack, ling, cod, coalfish and numerous other species on every day we fished: bread-and-butter Irish inshore boat angling, it's true. But it is not the fishing I remember most: it was the story telling. Non-stop tales of past trips began each morning at breakfast and continued throughout the entire time we were fishing, and well on into the night. Many were classic stories that I had read in Angling magazine or Clive's book Salt Water Fishing In Ireland.

'So there we were, Brennan and I, following Flannery's pipe and drum band all around the streets of Dingle, Co. Kerry, with half the children of the town at our heels. Every minute or two, the man beating the big drum glanced nervously around at us, his implacable pursuers. As well he might, for he, Martin Flannery, had promised to take us down at low tide to show us where the razor-fish colony was.' So began Clive's article, It Was A Pity Martin Flannery Missed The Tide, published in the June 1964 issue of Creel magazine.

I never read that article when it was first published (I was a mere three years old), but had read several versions in various publications, along with hearing the story many times from Clive himself. Apparently the tide had covered the razor beds at Milltown in Dingle Harbour by the time that Flannery was able to make good on his promise of help to gather much-needed bait for bass. Clive and Des had driven over the high Connor Pass in an attempt to gather bait at Cloghane on the north side of the Dingle peninsula. They managed to gather a bucket of clams that produced 'half a dozen reasonable fish of up to 6lb'. The full version of this article, A Dilly Day At Dingle, first brought Clive's work to the attention of the publishers of Sports Illustrated and as I write, the piece is still available to read on its website. ■



Clive's book is a classic and packed with stories of Irish sea angling adventures

Kevin Linnane with a bass caught at Inch

This was the ultimate dream trip for me: the promise of fishing in what was then (and remains) one of my favourite angling destinations anywhere – plus a full week with three angling legends

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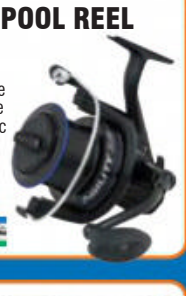

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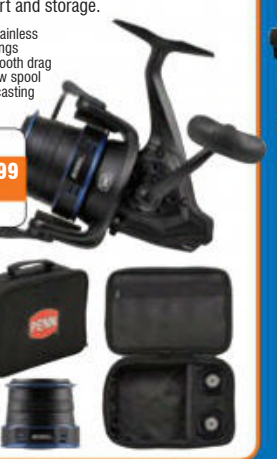

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Words & Pictures
DAVE LEWIS

LLANGENNITH

Consistently voted one of the UK's favourite beaches Llangennith is a surf angler's paradise

Located on the Gower coast in South Wales, Llangennith beach is a vast expanse of golden sand which extends for several miles in a southerly direction from the tidal island of Burry Holmes to the clifftop village of Rhosilli. I've fished at Llangennith for almost 50 years and this is undoubtedly my favourite British shore angling destination.

SPECIES

Given just the right conditions Llangennith can be a very productive for bass and flounder, both of which are caught throughout the year. Other species you can catch here include dabs, sole, dogfish, small turbot, smoothhounds and, perhaps most popular of all these days, golden grey mullet. Watch out for weever fish, which are often caught when fishing small baits.

BAIT

In my early days fishing at Llangennith bass were always our primary target species. Freshly dug lugworm or razorfish were our baits of choice when fishing the surf, but in recent years I have used maddies almost exclusively for bait at Llangennith. Known here in Wales as mudworm, and elsewhere as harbour ragworm, bunches of these tiny ragworm are a deadly bait for many species, notably flounder and golden grey mullet. However, what surprised me when I first started using maddies at Llangennith and at other Welsh surf beaches, was the number of bass that I started to catch when using them. Mostly these were undersized schoolies, but maddies not infrequently tempt much bigger fish. Of course, lugworm, both blow and black, remain an

A 'gennith schoolie

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Keep it simple when targeting golden greys

Golden grey mullet love maddies

excellent bait for surf bass and other species, as are razorfish and pretty much any other type of shellfish. Whole sandeels or squid can be deadly if fishing specifically for better quality fish.

TACTICS

When fishing at Llangennith I use a light surf rod rated for casting 2-4oz, which I like to match with a small multiplier loaded with 12-18lb clear or natural coloured monofilament line. Continental style surf outfits used with fixed spool reels are increasingly popular, especially with match anglers. I like to keep my terminal rigs as simple as possible whenever fishing a surf beach, and typically use a single or twin hook paternoster tied with reasonably long 12-20in hook lengths. I use long shank Aberdeen hooks such as the Sakuma 430 stainless in sizes 4-6 if fishing maddies, and larger 1-3/0 size when using lugworm, razorfish or sandeel.

My favourite time to fish at Llangennith is during the last couple of hours of the ebb tide, followed by the first hour or so of the flood. Other anglers prefer to fish the flooding tide up to and over high water. Consistently over the years I have found that the most productive tides are mid-range, ideally on a rising sequence of tides.

Rhossili beach looking towards the Worms Head

The biggest mistake many anglers make when fishing here as at other surf beach is casting too far. The standard advice when I was growing up was to 'cast beyond the third breaker,' advice that still holds good today, especially for bass. Typically look to cast 40-60 yards but if you are wading, which is how I like to fish any surf beach, there will often be times when fish are swimming about your feet, so a cast all but parallel to the shoreline may be all that is necessary.

Perfect conditions for a day's surf fishing at Llangennith are created when a gentle Atlantic swell pushes a clearly defined line of shallow rollers onto the flat sands. A south-westerly wind and low cloud with drizzle are the icing on the cake. Night fishing can be especially effective, especially for better quality bass.

Travel as lightly as you can at Llangennith. On big tides water can flood in very quickly causing tripods and tackle boxes to quickly become a nuisance. Hold your rod when fishing and pack what you need, including bait, into a bag or pocket you can wade into the surf with. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

To get to Llangennith beach exit the M4 at junction 47 and follow the signs for Gower, then the A4295 north Gower road, turning right towards Llangennith at the petrol station. At Llangennith follow the signs for the Hill End camp site beach car park where you pay a nominal charge to park a short distance from the beach. Fish can be caught all along the beach. Hot spots include in front of the stream near Burry Holmes and the 'White House' further south.

Llangennith is a very popular surfing beach so during weekend and holidays, and when the surf is up, you may need to walk north towards Burry Holmes and away from the surfers.

Hill End campsite facilities include a shop, toilets and a café.

Maddies and a wide range of other baits are available from Country Stores in Gowerton Tel: 01792 875050, and Mainwaring's in Swansea Tel: 01792 202245.

Words & Pictures
DAVE LEWIS

PENDINE SANDS

A Carmarthenshire classic, Pendine Sands is where simple surf tactics work wonders

GREAT SEA ANGLING VENUES • GREAT SEA ANGLING VENUES •

Your insight into the best shore and boat fishing that the UK and Ireland have to offer

A seven-mile expanse of flat, golden sands that extends from the mouth of the Taf estuary at Ginst Point in the east to the picturesque holiday village of Pendine in the west, Pendine is a classic surf beach. In addition to being one of the best known and productive surf beaches in the UK, at one time Pendine was the chosen venue for those attempting to break land speed records. In the past anglers were allowed to drive onto the beach to fish, but unfortunately, due to the reckless activity of a few, all vehicular access is prohibited. The only exception to this is when competing in club matches, where the organisers have obtained prior permission to drive along the beach.

A bait box on a belt is a real help if wading in the surf

SPECIES

Like many other South Wales surf beaches you can catch fish at Pendine throughout the year. My favourite times to fish here are during the autumn and spring, when given good conditions the flounder and bass fishing can be truly outstanding. During the summer the beach is very popular with holiday makers, so I try to fish early in the morning or in the evening. Bass and flounder can still be caught in good numbers throughout the winter. Other species caught include smoothounds, occasional plaice, turbot, as well as whiting and dogfish if fishing at night. Watch out for venomous weaver fish!

CONDITIONS

Ideal conditions to fish at Pendine are when a steady oceanic swell is rolling in from the open Atlantic, thus creating two or three flat tables of surf. Pendine is a very shallow beach and too much onshore wind, that's any wind with a southerly aspect, will very quickly create messy surf conditions, with a mass of confused waves breaking for several hundred yards back from the surf line. I do not like fishing any surf beach on big spring tides, especially very shallow beaches, and much prefer a mid-range set of tides. Locally this equates to tides between 11.2 and 11.8 Swansea scale.

TACTICS

Over the many years I have fished beaches here in South Wales I have found that the last two or three hours of the ebbing tide down to low water, followed by the first push of the flood tends to be the most productive period. That said, the optimum time of tide to fish can vary considerably. If you start around low water and fish the flooding tide you'll not go far wrong, especially if targeting flounder. Many locals rate the high-water period as being the most productive for bass. The trick when fishing at Pendine is not to cast too far out, especially when fishing a flooding tide, when often the fish will be feeding very close in.

Spring and autumn produces excellent flounder fishing

TACKLE

A simple two or three hook paternoster is an effective rig for general fishing on Welsh surf beaches. If flounder or golden grey mullet are my target species I use Sakuma 410 stainless steel hooks in sizes between size 2 and 4, occasionally down to size 6. If targeting bass, I prefer a single hook paternoster with a larger size 1/0 up to 3/0 hook. All of my surf rigs are tied with an absolute minimum of components with the hook snoods, 12-18in in length cut from clear 15lb monofilament. More often than not I fish within 60 yards from the surf line, often much closer and I like to use the lightest lead possible, which usually means a plain bomb of between 2oz-4oz. I do carry a few grip leads for use whenever the surge of the surf is really lively.

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE
To get to Pendine Sands, follow the signs from the A477 between Carmarthen and Tenby. Once you arrive in the village you will find a large pay and display car park next to the beach. Access to the opposite end of the beach is possible by driving along the coast road from Pendine Village to Ginst. Aside from offering good fishing, Pendine Sands are an excellent venue for digging/pumping black lug.h.

TACKLE SHOPS
■ Anglers Corner Milford Haven
Tel: 01646 698899
■ Anglers Corner Llanelli
Tel: 01554 773981

Words KEVIN CROWLEY
Pictures DAVE LEWIS

BRANDON BAY

Eleven kilometres of some of the best surf beach fishing you could wish for make Brandon a surf fishing Mecca

On the northern shore of the Dingle Peninsula lies the famed surf beaches of Brandon. This is actually an 11km long stretch of beach, with various names along its length: Fermoyle at the western end, then Kilcummin, Gowlane and finally Stradbally. Although northern facing, these are true surf beaches, the swell coming around Brandon Head can put a fine row of breakers on even calm days. If the surf is too big, try Fermoyle at the western end, by Brandon Head ,which is a little more sheltered. If Fermoyle is flat calm, there may be nice surf on Stradbally. Stradbally also has more lateral tide which is almost unnoticeable by the time you reach Fermoyle. Weed can sometimes be a problem, but rarely covers the whole bay and you will usually find clear water by moving.

A big surf here can have a massive surge, particularly on big tides, so anglers should be cautious wading out to cast or retrieve a fish, as the surge can catch you out, particularly at night. I have fished it on a stormy night when we had to be very aware of our surroundings, but even in those conditions we had bass and painted (small eyed) ray. The beach is very popular with surfers, but on 11km of coast there is usually plenty of room for everyone.

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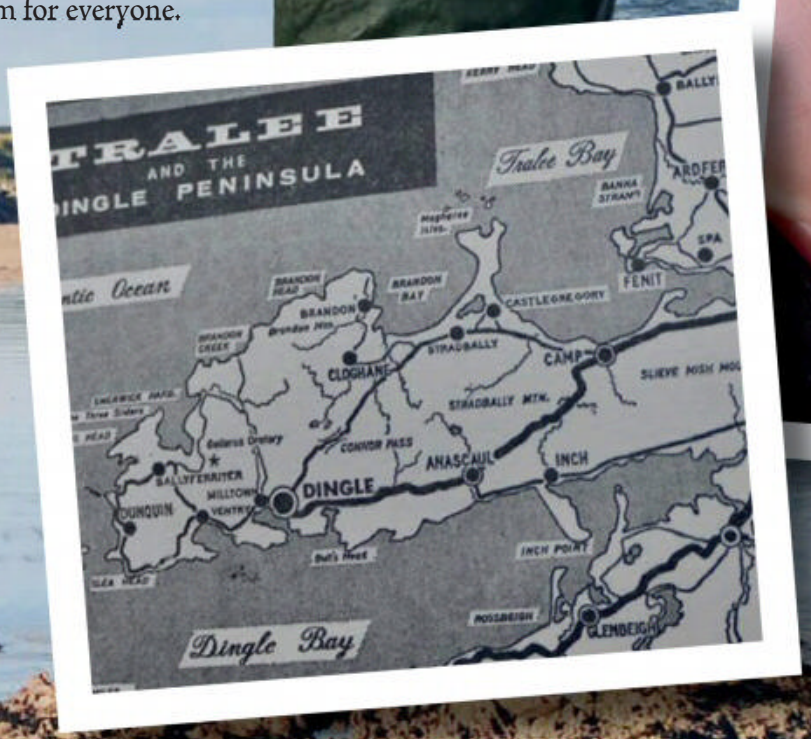
Razorfish can be deadly for bass



Bass are caught on both bait and lures

THE FISHING

Known for the bass fishing, Stradbally also produces flounder, turbot, sea trout, thornback and painted ray, coalfish and dogfish. Bass is the primary quarry here, with bait fishing producing fish through the autumn and winter, and spinning lures very successful in summer. Flatties are caught all year round, with the best fishing in early autumn. The Kilcummin/Fermoyle end is known for the ray fishing, with painted ray up to 12lb being targeted in autumn in particular. The ray are found in the surf tables and don't require a massive cast. Big sandeel baits will work well for the rays.

The whole beach fishes well for the first half of the flood. Fermoyle and Stradbally continue to fish well towards the top of the tide, while Gowlane fishes well on the ebb down to low tide. Nearby Cloghane estuary, just west of Fermoyle, provides excellent bait and lure fishing for bass, flounder and sea trout. Peeler crab is the preferred bait here. Note that a licence is required for sea trout fishing.

ACCESS

The beach can be accessed at several points via tracks off the main road, all signposted. It is possible to drive onto the beach, but this not advised due to the soft sand in places.

BAIT

Lugworm is the most popular bait, and can be dug in the estuary west of Fermoyle and at Kilshannig, at the end of the Maharees headland. Mackerel can be caught off Brandon Pier in summer, but the nearest bait supply is the tackle shops in Tralee – Landers and the (excellent) Angling Hub. The Angling Hub is run by Martin McGowan, a keen angler himself, and a mine of information. Worm and crab can be ordered in advance. Sandeel is a top bait for the ray, which move in in summer and are caught into early winter. ■

NEED TO KNOW

Get the ferry to Dublin (routes from Holyhead and Liverpool) or Rosslare (from Pembroke). Dingle is a 4.5 hour drive from Rosslare and similar from Dublin. Stradbally is a 25 minute drive from Dingle, or just over 30 minutes from Tralee.

STAY

Castlegregory is a charming little village at the eastern end of Stradbally, and there are many self-catering cottages and B&Bs in the area. Dingle town, on the far side of the scenic Connor Pass, is the biggest accommodation centre in the area, and is famous for its sheer number of pubs, offering plenty of options for post-fishing entertainment. Many pubs offer great food too.

Check out www.discoverireland.ie for recommended accommodation options.

Words KEVIN CROWLEY
Pictures DAVE LEWIS
MIKE THRUSSELL

GREAT SEA ANGLING VENUES • GREAT SEA ANGLING VENUES •

Your insight into the best shore and boat fishing that the UK and Ireland have to offer

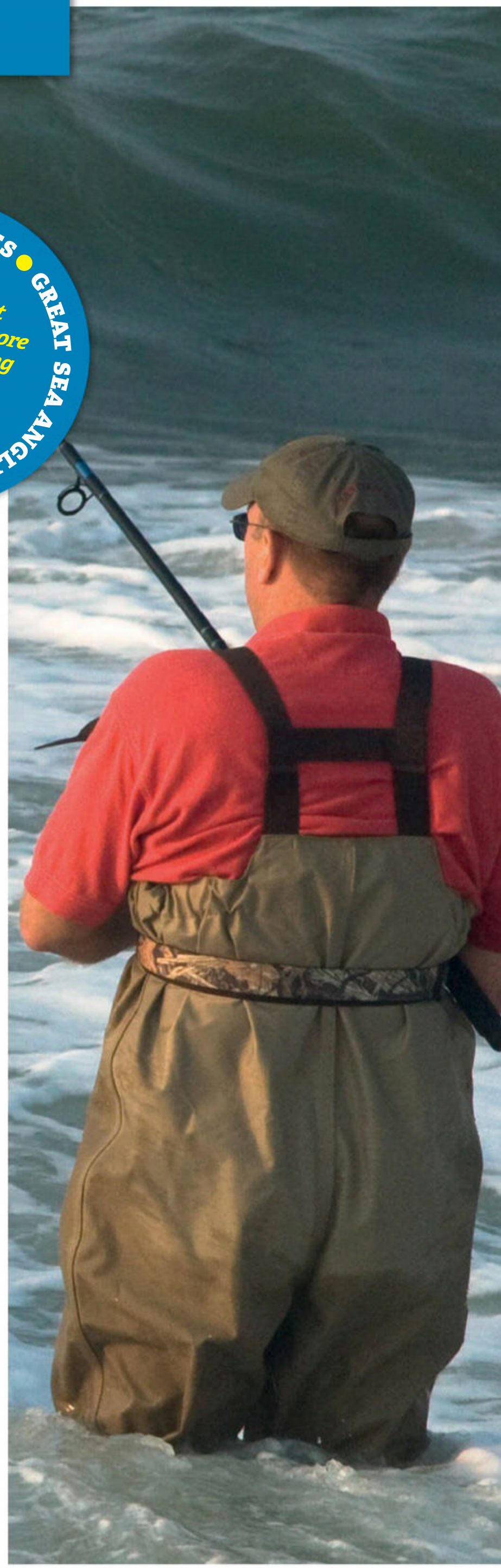
INCH

Possibly County Kerry's most famous surf venue, Inch provides classic Irish surf fishing and is a must-fish venue for any visiting bass angler

A few miles east of Dingle, on the southern side of the Dingle Peninsula, lies a 5km long sand spit that protects Castlemaine Harbour from the Atlantic storms that sweep in through autumn and winter. Taking the brunt of those storms, Inch has been the spiritual home of storm surf fishing since at least the 1960s. It's a rare day when there is no surf on Inch, and many days when the row of breakers seems to stretch for miles. It is shallow, so the surf tables stretch out a long way, but fish can be found surprisingly close in those tables.

THE FISHING

Fishing is best on Inch when there is a good surf. To quote the late Bob Moss, one of many to write about Inch: "Give it a go on a fine day when the sun is shining through translucent tables of sparkling surf. Feel the salt drying on skin burned brown by a soft westerly breeze from offshore and maybe feel the pull of a bass as it slams into your bait."



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OR CONTACT US:
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TEL: 0161-4772580

WHERE TO FISH

Bass are the main attraction on Inch, and it is bass that draws anglers from all over to fish it. There are good stocks of flatfish too, flounder, turbot and dabs, with flounder dominating catches, especially at the car park end. You can expect dogfish and occasional ray here too, especially at night and in calmer conditions.

Fishing the flood tide and a couple of hours into the ebb offers the best results. Weed can sometimes be an issue, but moving along the beach will often find clearer water. Further down the beach, as you near the end of the spit and the main channel, deeper gullies are formed and these hold dabs and thornback ray. Dogfish, bass and flounder are also caught here. Tope can be targeted here, usually at night on a flood tide in summer, and further on from the end of the spit casting into the channel.

The back bay behind the sand dunes dries out at low tide, but fishing into the channel bass, flounder and occasional stingray can be caught on peeler crab, with the last of the flood and start of the ebb the best time. The rocky shoreline to the west of Inch, from the car park end, is also a good mark for lure fishing for bass. Rocks and kelp predominate here, making weedless soft plastics an ideal choice.

Fishing is best as the tide floods

ACCESS

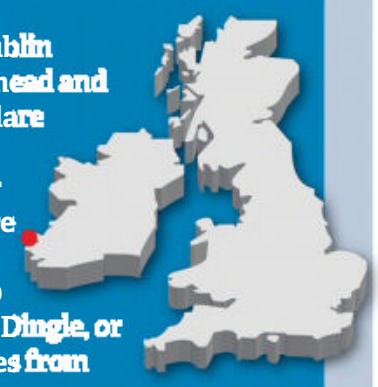
There is a car park at the single entrance to the beach, Many people drive onto the beach, but cars getting stuck in soft sand is a common occurrence, so it is not advised. The local farmer makes a tidy income from towing stuck cars with his tractor – enough said!

There is a bar and restaurant – Sammy's – at the entrance to the beach, which is very handy when fishing the car park end. Good food and takeaway coffee goes a long way on those lengthy sessions!

BAIT

Lugworm can be dug in the bay behind the spit, and is the most popular bait, maddies (harbour ragworm), work very well for flounder. The nearest bait supply is the tackle shops in Tralee – the Angling Hub and Landers. The Angling Hub is run by Martin McGowan, a keen angler himself, and a mine of information. Worm and crab can be ordered in advance. ■

NEED TO KNOW

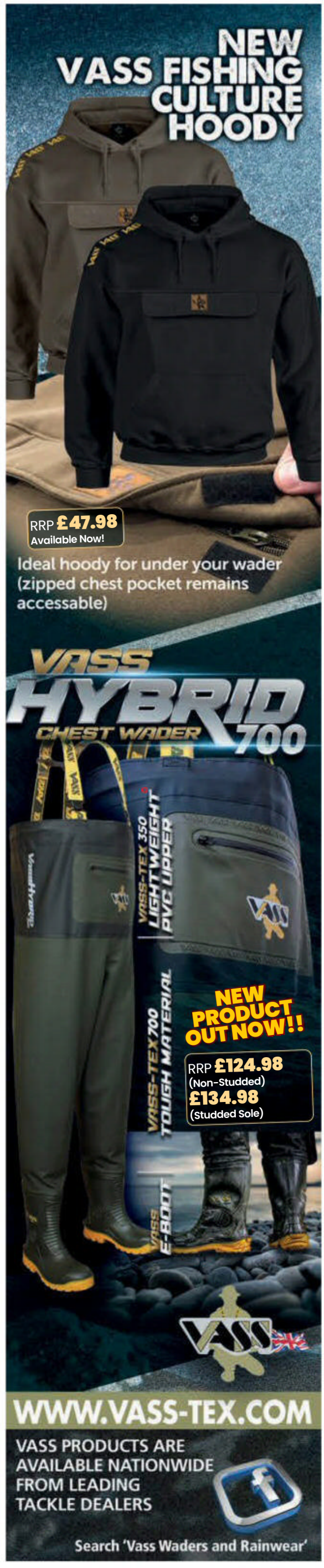


Get the ferry to Dublin (routes from Holyhead and Liverpool) or Rosslare (from Pembroke). Dingle is a 4.5 hour drive from Rosslare and similar from Dublin. Inch is a 20 minute drive from Dingle, or just over 30 minutes from Tralee.

STAY

There is a fully serviced campsite adjacent to the beach (www.inchbeach.com) with B&B and self-catering cottages also available on site. Next door, the Seafront Inn offers B&B accommodation, and has a great bar and restaurant with stunning views over the bay. The Dingle Peninsula has a huge range of accommodation, from self-catering cottages to B&Bs and 4-star hotels. Dingle Town is the nearest large town with plenty of nightlife and restaurants. Tralee is another large centre with plenty of accommodation options.

Check out www.discoverireland.ie for recommended accommodation options.



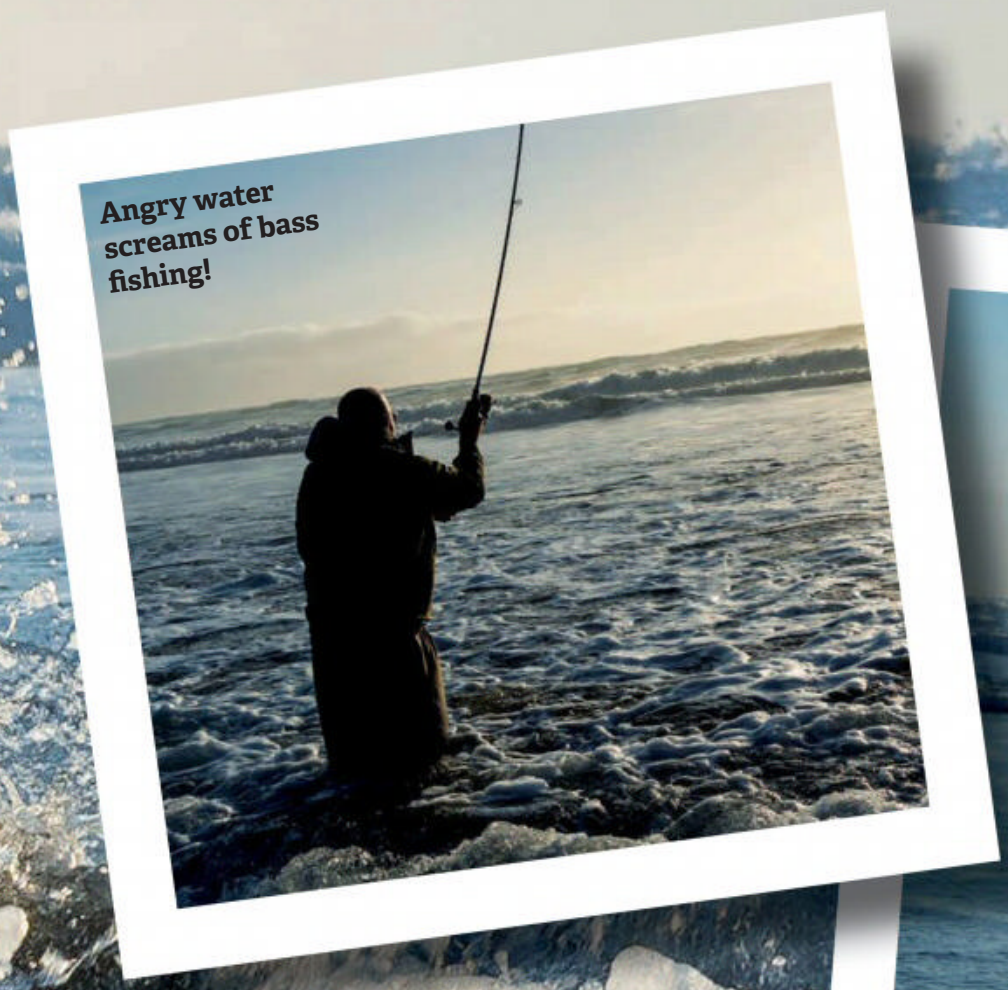
Words and Photography: HENRY GILBEY

CRASH BANG WALLOP

Henry Gilbey shares his love of bassing in the surf and how to lure fish in the swell

Surf fishing is quite possibly the most electric way to fish for bass, and every single bass you hook when fishing like this is worth at least double because they fight so hard in all that oxygenated water. In my book it's about as good as fishing gets. All that moving water, all that noise of the crashing waves and their relentless assault upon the coastline. And then that hit from a fish in all that turbulence. It's a rush, and I love it.

Catching bass in the surf is nothing new of course; Indeed, my first memories of hearing about these fish was from the pages of this very magazine. I remember those stories of Irish exploits on the big west coast surf beaches when the writer would be standing thigh-deep on a lonely beach fishing ledgered baits and holding their rod to feel for bites. But you can also catch these bass on lures. When this lure fishing addiction started to consume me like no other type of fishing ever has. Little did I realise that I would eventually end up standing waist-deep on various surf beaches myself. I had no idea that one species of saltwater fish could be targeted in



Angry water screams of bass fishing!

Surf bass fight extra hard

so many different ways, so it was a wonderful kind of full circle to find myself lure fishing on the very type of surf beaches I used to read about.

SO WHAT SORT OF SURF ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

There is surf and then there is surf, and we are generally looking for a particular type of surf to target bass on lures. It was an angler/surfer from the north coast of Cornwall who helped me narrow down how we might look at the sort of water we want for bass fishing, because not all surf is remotely the same. If you want to go surf fishing for bass then I would suggest looking for west and south west facing storm beaches where surfers line up on the waves when conditions for them are good, but it is actually when the surf is the right way for surfing that we don't tend to do so well for bass. When you see those lovely, uniform looking waves rolling is the time for surfing, but when that same beach turns into far more ▶

of an onshore mix up of angry looking, wavy chop, that's when we want to get the lure rods out and target bass.

You will need to start learning how to 'read' the surf forecasts on an app like Magic Seaweed. In general, I am looking for a wind direction that is blowing onshore combined with a decent swell which then gives rise to choppy waves as the swell hits shallow water around the coastline. Not all beaches are surf beaches of course – steep beaches, for example, don't really produce surfable waves – but when that swell hits a surf beach, and if you combine it with offshore winds to help hold the face of the wave up, this is what surfers are looking for. When we get swell combined with onshore winds to mess the surf up and take away that uniformity of shape, that's what I am looking for. Broken, messy, waves with a swell period under about 10 seconds (the time between the waves – longer swell periods tends to mean cleaner waves for the surfers) is when I will start thinking about lure fishing in the surf.

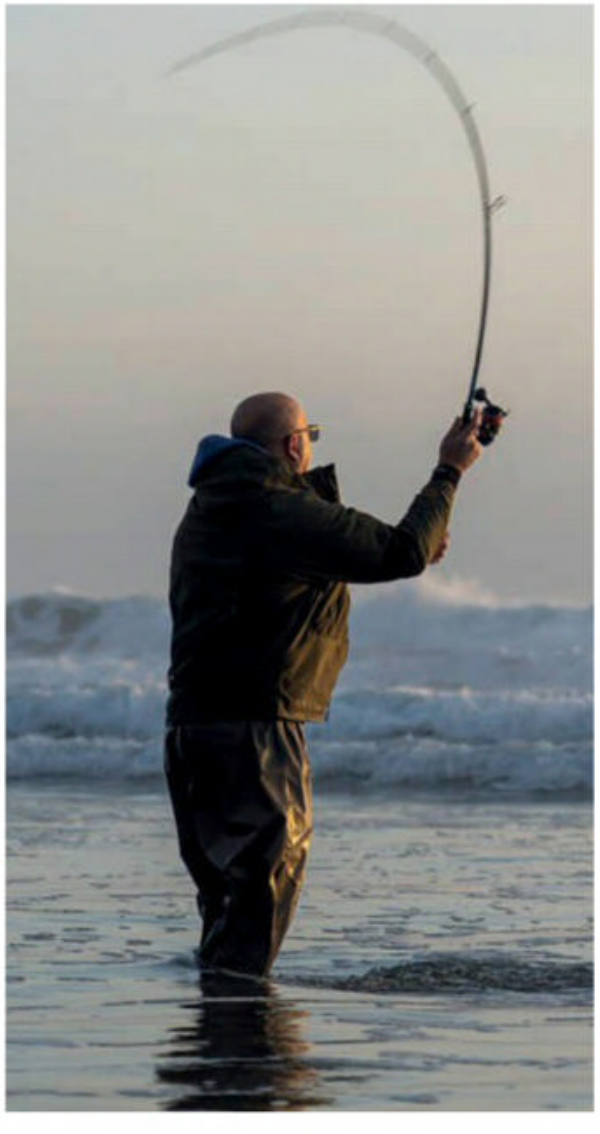
PREPARATION IS KEY

Surf fishing in more hectic sea conditions calls for a bit of thought. It's not dangerous if you take good care, but this is a very different type of bass fishing to wandering a quiet estuary at first light with a few subtle lures. If you have got the right surf conditions then you are going to be fishing in amongst some angry looking water that is rushing at you all the time and trying to get in and under your jacket or smock and down the front of your waders for starters.

It never ceases to amaze me how efficiently bass can feed and find lures in what can be some wild sea conditions. You don't need to go fishing massive seas of course, but as you gain in confidence and learn about how the beaches you choose to fish respond to certain swell sizes and wind directions, you might end up fishing bigger surf than you first envisaged. Most of the surf beaches on the north coast of Cornwall can take a much bigger surf and not colour up or fill up with weed than my local beaches on the south coast for example, but the two coastlines then respond differently to various wind directions and sizes of swell and I can pick and choose where I go.

Assuming you are wearing some sort of chest waders to go surf fishing, put a waterproof top on and then tighten up that wading belt over the top of the jacket or smock. When you wade out the surging water will try to force its way up literally underneath your top and then up and over the front of your waders, and by doing a belt up over your waterproof garment you are helping to prevent this happening. Believe me, it's pretty unpleasant to end up with cold water in your waders before it has even got light!

Preparation will pay dividends when surf fishing



If you can see feeding birds then fish around them; that's a signal that there is bait around

'Read' the water to understand where the bass will be

DON'T JUST WADE OUT

When you catch bass in the surf, there tends to be a reason why the fish are there. If you can see feeding birds then fish around them; that's a signal that there is bait around. Otherwise, have a good look at the sea and try to literally read the water. The way the waves break onto a shoreline tell you a lot about what is going on underneath the water in terms of gullies and holes and sandbanks. If you see breaking white water consistently calming down then the wave has just hit a bit of deeper water – this could be a hole or a gully in which

IMA Hound 125F Glide

Targeting the surf zone with lures is all about coping with the conditions and understanding how to get a lure in front of an interested fish

food. Target an area like this. Rip currents often run out from the shore where there is a big hole or gully and lots of turbulence, so be careful in water like that but definitely fish either side of it especially.

GEAR FOR SURF FISHING

Subtly presenting a small surface lure this is not! Targeting the surf zone with lures is all about coping with the conditions and understanding how to get a lure in front of an interested fish. This might sound obvious, but we are contending with wind and waves and turbulence and currents which want to ruin your efforts if you aren't fishing with the right kind of lure. I will fish my Gravity Stick soft plastics in smaller to medium surf conditions. Indeed, I will never forget a bite I had a couple of years ago, literally off the end of my rod tip as I went to lift my white Paddletail out of the water to cast again. For the most part though I am looking to fish the less subtle lures which can punch into headwinds, cover a lot of water, and quite literally grip into all that turbulence. If I am fishing with regular hard lures it's always going to be the IMA Hound 125F Glide that I turn to – awesome casting, amazing grip – but more often than not I will be fishing with some kind of metal lure. For me it's mostly going to be the Savage Gear Surf Seeker in the 30g, 35g, and 40g sizes depending on how much weight I need from my lure to cope with the conditions. Lots of metals will get you out there, but I honestly haven't come across a metal quite like the Seeker for flying like an arrow into strong winds and then gripping so well in really rough conditions. The action on these Seekers is amazing, and although they are a (heavy) metal lure, they swim nice and shallow. I also carry the Sandeel Pencil 125 and 150 lures, but I fish these in less hectic surf conditions.

The main spinning reels worth thinking about for surf fishing are the Penn Slammer IV 2500, 3500 and 4500, plus the Van Staal VR50 which can be hard to get hold of sometimes. If you are surf fishing then your spinning reel is going to get a proper dunking from time to time, and as much as I love an uber-smooth Shimano or Daiwa reel, they do not like any kind of saltwater ingress at all. The Slammers laughs at this kind of stuff. My go-to surf rods are the Savage Gear SG5 9ft 6in 9-35g or 9ft 6in 12-46g, depending on how heavy the sea is and what weight of lures I think I will need to fish with. Surf fishing is all about a mix of presenting the right kind of lure in some very challenging conditions, but when a bass slams into your lure in all that fizz I defy you not to laugh out loud. ■

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Catch a specimen fish to stand a chance of winning some great new prizes on offer

FANCY WINNING A NEW ROD AND REEL COMBO from Okuma by catching a great fish? In our catch competition, your target is to catch one over the weight given on our nominated species list. If you do, enter our contest and you automatically stand a chance of winning either our shore or boat prize.

Each issue we award a superb Okuma package to the captor of the best shore fish and best boat-caught fish, both chosen on merit.

Prizes are awarded at our discretion and Okuma reserves the right to send alternative prizes.

Steve Wells, Sussex
FISH: 15lb thornback ray
VENUE: Aboard Flamer IV, Dorset
BAIT: mackerel head **DATE:** May 4th

Rick Upton, Sussex
FISH: 8lb ballan wrasse
VENUE: Newhaven, Sussex **DATE:** May 1st

Andy Games, Cheshire
FISH: 10lb bull huss **BAIT:** Squid and mackerel
VENUE: Anglesey **DATE:** April 28th

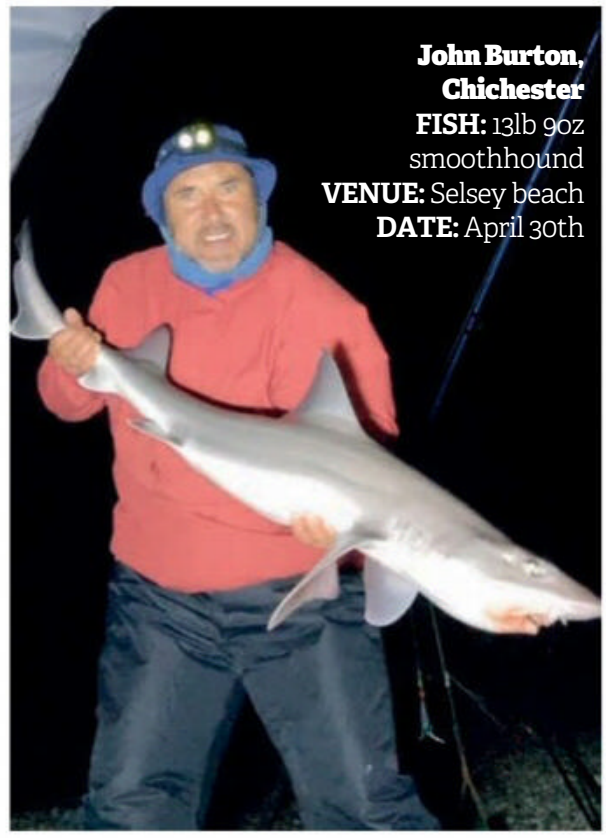
Jim Atkins, Portsmouth
FISH: 4lb 7oz black bream **VENUE:** Bognor Rocks **BAIT:** Squid **DATE:** May 1st

Ed Povey, Gloucestershire
FISH: 11lb bass **BAIT:** joey mackerel
VENUE: Portishead, Bristol Channel
DATE: April 10th

Andy Smith, East Sussex
FISH: 17lb blonde ray
BAIT: Bluey and squid
VENUE: Langley point, Eastbourne
DATE: 28th April

In association with
okuma
INSPIRED FISHING

Reg Phillips, Shoreham by Sea
FISH: 20lb blonde ray **VENUE:** Weymouth, Flamer IV **DATE:** May 1st



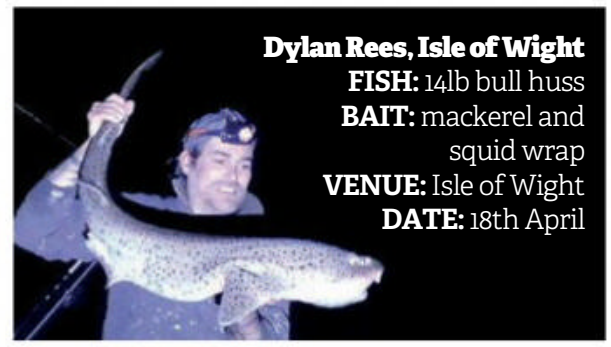
John Burton, Chichester
FISH: 13lb 9oz smoothhound
VENUE: Selsey beach
DATE: April 30th

Ben Callighan, Fleetwood
FISH: 10lb thornback ray **VENUE:** Cleveleys, Lancashire **BAIT:** Squid and black lug
DATE: April 16th

Martin Newell
FISH: 8lb turbot **VENUE:** Weymouth, Flamer IV
DATE: May 1st

Alex Rowland, Dorset
FISH: 25lb 3oz blonde ray
BAIT: mackerel and sandeel.
VENUE: Boscombe Pier
DATE: April 12th

Michael Warry, Rhondda
FISH: 10lb bass
BAIT: mackerel
VENUE: Ogmore Deeps, South Wales
DATE: April 22nd



Dylan Rees, Isle of Wight
FISH: 14lb bull huss
BAIT: mackerel and squid wrap
VENUE: Isle of Wight
DATE: 18th April

Greg Holman
FISH: 17lb blonde ray **VENUE:** Weymouth, Flamer IV **DATE:** May 1st

Kenneth Forrest, Lancashire
FISH: 10lb14oz thornback ray **BAIT:** Sandeel
VENUE: Derrymore, Co. Kerry **DATE:** April 21st

Nigel Penney
FISH: 17lb blonde ray **BAIT:** Calamari squid and mackerel fillet. **VENUE:** FLAMER IV, Weymouth **DATE:** April 8th

MONTHLY WINNERS:
SHORE: Ed Povey, Gloucestershire
BOAT: Rick Upton, Sussex

In association with okuma INSPIRED FISHING

MISSION RECORD HOLDERS

BASS
■ **Shore:** 19lb 13oz 8dr
John Locker
■ **Boat:** 19lb 4oz
Wayne Milton
BLACK BREAM
■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz 1dr
C Le Monnier
■ **Boat:** 6lb 6oz
Tony Heart
COUCH'S BREAM
■ **Shore:** 2lb 15oz 1dr
Lynton Carre
■ **Boat:** 7lb Becky
Lee Hodges
GILTHEAD BREAM
■ **Shore:** 9lb 8oz
Scott Smy
■ **Boat:** 10lb 2oz
Roger Simcox
PANDORA'S BREAM
■ **Shore:** 1lb 2oz
Baz Wheater
RAY'S BREAM
■ **Shore:** 6lb 1oz
Jordan Colwell
RED BREAM
■ **Boat:** 6lb 4oz
Patrick Meegan
BRILL
■ **Shore:** 6lb 12oz
Mark Griggs
■ **Boat:** 13lb 10oz
Tony Hayward
BULL HUSS
■ **Shore:** 21lb 9oz
M Urquhart
■ **Boat:** 23lb
D Nicholson
BALLAN WRASSE
■ **Shore:** 9lb 4oz
Darren Swift
■ **Boat:** 9lb
Glen Carter
CUCKOO WRASSE
■ **Shore:** 1lb 13oz
Joe Edward
■ **Boat:** 2lb 4oz
D Glendenning
COALFISH
■ **Boat:** 34lb
Peter Sillito
COD
■ **Shore:** 32lb
Adrian Lloyd
■ **Boat:** 49lb
Tony Urwin
CONGER EEL
■ **Shore:** 66lb 8oz
Andy Eke
■ **Boat:** 109lb 8oz
Roger Beer
DAB
■ **Shore:** 2lb 4oz 12dr
Jason Tucker
■ **Boat:** 1lb 15oz
Sean McCaffrey
DOVER SOLE
■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz
Phil Troke
■ **Boat:** 4lb 6oz
M Le-Moignan
FLOUNDER
■ **Shore:** 4lb 14oz 8dr
Paul Blehs
■ **Boat:** 5lb 3oz 14dr
Philip Dawson
HALIBUT
■ **Boat:** 76lb
Peter Sillito
LEMON SOLE
■ **Boat:** 3lb 3oz
G Newcombe
MEGRIM
■ **Boat:** 2lb 14oz
Philip Lewis
PLAICE
■ **Shore:** 6lb 11oz
Martin Coates
■ **Boat:** 8lb 0oz 8dr
M Mowbray
LING
■ **Shore:** 18lb 11oz
Ross McKay
■ **Boat:** 88lb 6oz 8dr
Gareth Laurenson
GOLDEN GREY MULLET
■ **Shore:** 3lb 8oz 8dr
D Woolcombe
■ **Boat:** 4lb 11oz
Stephan Martini
TRIGGER FISH
■ **Boat:** 5lb
Gordon Baines
■ **Shore:** 3lb 7oz
Mark Cundick

MULLET
■ **Shore:** 11lb 8oz
Glenn Lane
■ **Boat:** 11lb
Chris Harris
POLLACK
■ **Shore:** 18lb 4oz
Chris Griffin
■ **Boat:** 27lb 1oz
Barry James
BLONDE RAY
■ **Shore:** 31lb
Gary Tucker
■ **Boat:** 39lb 10oz
S Underwood
COMMON SKATE
■ **Shore:** 232lb
Lew Marsden
■ **Boat:** 249lb
Hans Dykman
CUCKOO RAY
■ **Shore:** 4lb 11oz
Kevin Hughes
■ **Boat:** 5lb 8oz
L Longmore
EAGLE RAY
■ **Shore:** 102lb
Ray Lewis
ELECTRIC RAY
■ **Boat:** 52lb
Chris Wood
MARBLED RAY
■ **Shore:** 11lb 1oz 5dr
Pierre Garrick
■ **Boat:** 21lb 7oz 12dr
David Bree
SMALL-EYED RAY
■ **Shore:** 17lb 8oz
M Robertson
■ **Boat:** 21lb
Dave Lynes
SPOTTED RAY
■ **Shore:** 7lb 14oz
Liam Warder
■ **Boat:** 8lb 4oz
Neil Buckett
STINGRAY
■ **Shore:** 75lb 4oz
Ed Spring
■ **Boat:** 69lb 8oz
John Styles
THORNBACK RAY
■ **Shore:** 22lb 11oz 10dr
Mike Johnson
■ **Boat:** 24lb 11oz
Gary Mewdell
UNDULATE RAY
■ **Shore:** 20lb 1oz
Steve Harder
■ **Boat:** 25lb 2oz
Scott Russell
ANGEL SHARK
■ **Boat:** 54lb
John Johnson
BLUE SHARK
■ **Boat:** 253lb
James Fellows
MAKO SHARK
■ **Shore:** 194lb 4oz
Andrew Griffith
PORBEAGLE SHARK
■ **Boat:** 550lb,
Simon Davidson
THRESHER SHARK
■ **Boat:** 350lb
Bob Smith
SMOOTHHOUND
■ **Shore:** 28lb 10oz
Steve Cullen
■ **Boat:** 30lb
Trevor Knight
SPURDOG
■ **Shore:** 18lb 14oz
William Roche
■ **Boat:** 27lb 3oz
Paul Westaway
TOPE
■ **Shore:** 66lb 10oz
Michael Bell
■ **Boat:** 86lb
David Cook
TORSK
■ **Shore:** 9lb 5oz
Tommy Fraser
TURBOT
■ **Shore:** 20lb 2oz
Eddy Barham
■ **Boat:** 32lb 1oz
Steve Scally
WHITE SKATE
■ **Boat:** 160lb
Pete Hammersley

Dan Gould
FISH: 3lb 11oz spotted ray
BAIT: squid and mackerel
VENUE: Sussex
DATE: April 17th

Alex Canham, Essex
FISH: 19lb blonde ray **BAIT:** Squid and mackerel cocktail **VENUE:** Weymouth, Flamer IV
DATE: April 9th

HOW TO ENTER

Entry by email only to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
Please supply these details: angler's name, age, address, telephone number, email, type of fish, weight of fish, where caught, date caught, bait/rig, whether caught from shore or boat, if from charter boat, give name of boat, port and skipper. Please state if the fish was retained or returned.

YOUR MISSION TARGETS...

Catch a fish on this list at the weight or above in your region to qualify for the chance to win prizes in our Mission catch competition.

To enter, send us the details requested on the entry form (left) and email that information and your picture to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	7lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's & Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	10lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Halibut	20lb	20lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coalfish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Trigger fish	2lb	3lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

Send us your entries and win some great prizes

■ **SHORE: LURE OPTION**
Solaris 4000 or 5000 reel
RRP: £60
Epixor 15-50g rod
RRP: £80

■ **SHORE: BAIT OPTION**
DSA reel
RRP: £60
Wave Power surf rod

■ **BOAT**
Classic CLX
RRP: £60
Cortez Boat Rod
RRP: £90

THE RULES...

- Only fish caught since May 2022 are eligible.
- We must see a picture of the fish.
- We may refuse an entry. ■ Enter by email only (please include all of the information requested in How to Enter panel) to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
- Prizes as stated (Okuma reserves the right to send alternatives).
- No correspondence will be entered into.

Glasgow Angling Centre
FISHING MEGASTORE
Unit 1 The Point Retail Park, 29 Saracen Street, Glasgow, G22 5HT
GLASGOW: 0141 212 8880

FISHING MEGA STORE .COM

Edinburgh Angling Centre
FISHING MEGASTORE
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EDINBURGH: 0131 202 6351

IMAX

Ocean 1pc Floatation Suit

SALE

HALF PRICE

- Very lightweight of under 2kg
- Heavy duty 75x75D 100% polyester pongee shell fabric
- 100% waterproof of more than 8.000mm
- Low density EPE buoyancy foam
- Soft 210T 100% polyester taffeta lining
- Heavy duty 2-way front zip with double storm fillets
- High inner fleece-lined collar

RRP £169.99

OUR PRICE

£85

CODE	SIZE
SV16499	XL
SV16500	2XL

DAM IMAX

Oceanic Thermo Suit

BEST SELLER

This 2-piece suit will keep you warm and dry on windy, cold days. When going on a boat, fishing on the pier or standing by the bank of the lake, the last thing you need to think about, is how to keep warm. This suit will protect you from Mother nature.

Please note that due to an ongoing brand change, some suits may feature a DAM logo.

RRP £134.99

OUR PRICE

£99.99

CODE	SIZE
SV21738	S
SV21739	M
SV21740	L
SV21741	XL
SV21742	2XL

FISHEAGLE

Expert MKII 2pc Flotation Suit

NEW

The latest edition of the best selling Expert 2-piece Flotation suit is state of the art and has been produced and conforms to ISO 12402-5 & 12402-6 regulations. This update has all the functions and quality that you are used too, but with a modern touch and extra safety features. Bib and Brace trousers that are certified as a 50 Newton Buoyancy Aid having been specially designed to elevate the top half of your body when in water.

The suit features a reflective tape for night safety, a stitched-in belt with ITW Nexus buckle and a CE 394 whistle. Made from a light, wind and water-resistant fabric, they provide comfort for any inclement trips day or night as well as safety in the water.

RRP £139.99

OUR PRICE

£109.99

CODE	SIZE
RE0852	S
RE0853	M
RE0854	L
RE0855	XL
RE0856	2XL
RE0857	3XL
RE0858	4XL

okuma

Distance Surf Arena Fixed Spool Reel

- Graphite blade body
- Worm shaft Oscillation system
- 1 one-way roller bearing
- Cold Forged Aluminium Distance spool
- Flex aluminium line clip
- Bail lock system
- Saltwater resistant epoxy paint

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SV20018	DSA-60	0.40mm/210m	~~£59.99~~	£50.00

Shakespeare

Agility Surf Reels

Purpose built for UK beach fishing, Shakespeare's Agility Surf range are designed to handle saltwater use, and are thoroughly tested for reliability. Features a large capacity, distance casting spool, matched with a smooth drag system.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SP3392	70	20lbs/240yds	~~£64.99~~	£40.00
SP3391	80	15lbs/360yds	~~£66.99~~	£40.00

Shakespeare

Agility Saltwater FD Reel

SAVE £20!

The Agility Saltwater FD reels deliver a quality, saltwater proof reel for a great price. Holds up to 150m of 12lb mono or 300m of 30lb braid.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
SP4008	40	150m/12lb	~~£55.99~~	£30.00
SP4009	60	200m/20lb	~~£59.99~~	£40.00

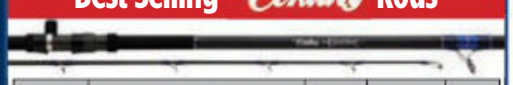
Abu Garcia

6500C3 CT Premium

The 6500C3 CT Premium edition is built to the same high standard as its label mate, the 6500C3 CT, but weighs in a whole 105g lighter, giving you a durable yet lightweight multiplier you can rely on.

CODE	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PU1515	200yds/20lb	~~£209.99~~	£150.00

Best Selling Century Rods



CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PRICE
CN0181	Graphex Match Beach	13ft 6	125-175g	£515
CN0182	Graphex Supermatch LD Beachcaster	13ft	50-150g	£499
CN0183	Graphex Ultralite ST Beachcaster	13ft	50-125g	£475
CN0394	Fireblade Surf	13ft	4-6oz	£275
CN0180	Tip Tornado Beach	13ft 6	4-7oz	£520
CN0064	Excalibur TT Beach	14ft 10	3.5-8oz	£650
CN0153	Eliminator T700	15ft	4-7oz	£565

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE OUR HUGE STOCK OF CENTURY RODS, INCLUDING BASS, BOAT & SPINNING RODS!

PENN

Rampage 2 Beachcaster Rods

SALE

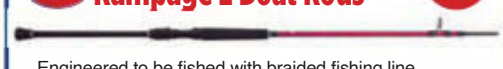
Constructed from a blend of 24-ton carbon and featuring Fuji rings throughout perfect for almost all aspects of beach angling around the UK shores.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE1700	13ft	4-6oz	3	~~£119.99~~	£80.00
PE1807	14ft	80-120g	3	~~£149.99~~	£80.00
PE1806	14ft	120-170g	3	~~£169.99~~	£150.00

PENN

Rampage 2 Boat Rods

SALE



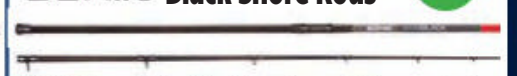
Engineered to be fished with braided fishing line, these rods can take the extra strain created by these hi-tech lines and will punish any fish.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PE1706	7ft8	12-20lb	4	~~£84.99~~	£50.00
PE1707	7ft6	20-30lb	4	~~£84.99~~	£50.00
PE1708	7ft4	30-50lb	4	~~£84.99~~	£50.00
PE1709	7ft4	50lb	2	~~£84.99~~	£70.00
PE1818	7ft6	12lb	2	~~£89.99~~	£54.00
PE1817	7ft6	20lb	2	~~£89.99~~	£54.00

SONIK

Black Shore Rods

BEST SELLER



The SKS Black Shore Rods bring the world of top end surf rods to a whole new accessible level.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SO0244	Multiplier	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0245	Multiplier	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0246	Multiplier	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99
SO0360	Fixed Spool	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0361	Fixed Spool	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0362	Fixed Spool	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99

PENN

Tidal Surfcasting Rods

BEST SELLER

Tidal stands for everything you need for surfcasting: Super strong but lightweight and responsive 30T carbon blanks that are designed to have the best distance properties.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
PE2301	14ft	50-200g	3	£126.99
PE2302	14ft	100-225g	3	£126.99
PE2303	14ft	100-250g	3	£126.99
PE2304	14ft	100-300g	3	£126.99

FISHEAGLE

Saracen Boat Rod

The Saracen Boat Rod from Fisheagle continue the trend of uncomprimising performance balanced with outstanding value. The powerful 2 piece blank is rigged with fully lined guides, a dependable screw lock reel seat, and is rated at a versatile 20-30lb, making it ideal for a wide range of offshore targets in British waters.

CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
RE0552	7ft	20-30lb	2	~~£29.99~~	£14.99

PENN

Wrath Spinning Combos

NEW

Carbon spinning rods that are matched with the great PENN Wrath reels.

CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	NOW
PE2114	7ft	10-40g	2	£79.99
PE2115	8ft	20-40g	2	£84.99
PE2116	8ft	80-120g	2	£92.99
PE2117	9ft	30-60g	2	£92.99
PE2118	9ft	100-150g	2	£99.99
PE2119	10ft	20-80g	2	£99.99

Shakespeare

Agility LRF & HRF Rods

LRF targets any fish that's in the water and by fishing really light gear while HRF uses heavier lines by comparison and is commonly used to target Wrasse.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SP3484	LRF	6ft 7	0.5-7g	2	~~£34.99~~	£28.00
SP3485	LRF	7ft	5-15g	2	~~£36.99~~	£30.00
SP3948	HRF	8ft	10-20g	2+2	~~£59.99~~	£45.00
SP3949	HRF	8ft 6	20-40g	2+2	~~£61.99~~	£45.00

Shakespeare

Agility 2 Salt Uptide + Bass Rods

A fast taper, lightweight blank made from high grade carbon and designed to be held for long periods.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SP3936	Uptide	9ft 6	5-10oz	2	£75.00
SP3934	Bass	11ft	60-120g	5	£70.00

Shakespeare

Agility 2 Boat Salt Rod Series

These rods feature lightweight, fast actioned, yet powerful blanks designed to maximise bite detection.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SP3940	Boat	7ft	20lb	2	£40.00
SP3941	Boat	7ft	30lb	2	£40.00
SP3944	Braid	8ft	20-30lb	2	£50.00
SP3945	Expedition	7ft	20-30lb	4	£50.00
SP3946	Expedition	7ft	20-50lb	4	£50.00

Shakespeare

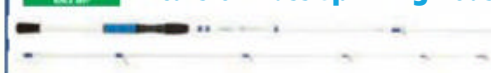
Agility 2 Exp Bass & Beach Rods

The Agility 2 Expedition will prove very popular for the modern sea fisherman. The strength of these multi piece rods is exceptional and the action has not been adversely effected by the addition of the extra spigots.

CODE	MODEL	LEN	CASTS	PCS	NOW
SP3934	Bass	11ft	60-120g	5	£70.00
SP3935	Beach	11ft 6	120-240g	5	£80.00

Shakespeare

Excursion Bass Spinning Rods



A custom PU grip enables these rods to be used in whatever conditions are thrown at you, especially on the shoreline. A white blank offers unparalleled bite indication and actions and lengths to cover all in-shore opportunities.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SP4200	8ft	Med 15-40g	2	~~£44.99~~	£24.00
SP4202	8ft	Heavy 30-60g	2	~~£44.99~~	£25.00
SP4203	9ft	Heavy 30-80g	2	~~£49.99~~	£30.00
SP4204	9ft	Med 15-45g	2	~~£49.99~~	£25.00

FISHEAGLE

Bait Pump

Finished in stainless steel, the Fisheagle Bait Pump will save you hours of back breaking work retreiving fresh bait.
Length: 50mm.

RE0230

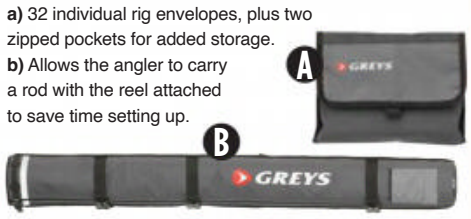
RRP: £49.99

£39.99

BEST SELLER

GREYS

Luggage



a) 32 individual rig envelopes, plus two zipped pockets for added storage.
b) Allows the angler to carry a rod with the reel attached to save time setting up.

	CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
A	GR2461	Rig Wallet	~~£59.99~~	£14.00
B	GR2463	Quiver	~~£36.99~~	£25.00

Shakespeare

Agility Luggage

a) Packed with 20 seperate resealable wallets.
b) Adjustable zip extension system allowing the length to extend by 50cm if required for longer rods.
c) Designed to be big enough to carry all the gear required, while remaining comfortable to carry.

	CODE	MODEL	NOW
A	SP3443	Rig Wallet	£16.00
B	SP3441	Rucksack	£25.00
C	SP3442	Quiver 145-190cm	£25.00

SAVAGE GEAR

Gravity Bass Stick Kit

A slim-profile, long-casting range of soft lures with a high specific gravity. This 30pc+17pc kit is ideal for those seeking to fish with these brand new lures but need each colour in the 3 tail types with hooks and weights.

BACK IN STOCK!

SV22099

RRP: £34.99

£26

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Order before 2.30pm Monday to Friday & get your order **NEXT DAY** (Sat extra).

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"First class..." ★★★★★ *"Uttings rocks!"* ★★★★★

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24 MONTHS FINANCE APR 14.9%
Now available on all orders over £500
INSTANT DECISION | NO PAPERWORK
Finance example based on **24mths**, 9.9% APR: Cash Price £1475, 10% Deposit £147.50, Monthly Payment £63.72, Total Amount Payable £1529.24

36 MONTHS FINANCE APR 19.9%
Now available on all orders over £500
INSTANT DECISION | NO PAPERWORK
Finance example based on **36mths**, 19.5% APR: Cash Price £1475, 10% Deposit £147.50, Monthly Payment £48.18, Total Amount Payable £1734.60

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G·Loomis — BASS LURE RODS

UK APPOINTED DEALER

IMX-PRO MAG BASS CASTING RODS

Bass casting rods designed for anglers that prefer the "Classic" Mag Bass actions. Full cork grips and fuji reel seats with Fuji K-frame guides provide positive grip and balance along with positive control. Incredible performance means extreme sensitivity, ultra-light weight, excellent balance and unbelievable power and strength!

IMX Pro Mag Bass 6ft 6in 7-18g 1 Piece....**£289.99**
IMX Pro Mag Bass 6ft 6in 7-21g 1 Piece....**£289.99**

IMX-PRO BASS SPINNING JIG RODS

Bass spinning rods designed for anglers that prefer the "Classic" Spin Jig actions. Full cork grips and fuji reel seats with Fuji K-frame guides provide positive grip and balance along with positive control. Incredible performance means extreme sensitivity, ultra-light weight, excellent balance and unbelievable power and strength!

IMX Pro Mag Bass 6ft 2-9g 1 Piece....**£289.99**
IMX Pro Mag Bass 7ft 4-10g 1 Piece....**£289.99**

SAVAGE GEAR — it's a savage world

"This is the first time I have been 100% involved with bass lure rods from initial ideas through to the finished products I am now fishing with." Henry Gilbey

SG58 • Fuji Torzite K-guides • Lighter • Fuji custom VSSD16+TVSK16 reel seats
PRECISION LURE SPECIALIST RODS
Perfectly balanced rods made for distance and precision casting with lures from the shore.

			RRP	NOW
SG58 9ft	9-35g	2 Piece	£319.99	£269.99
SG58 9ft 2in	9-35g	2 Piece	£339.99	£289.99
SG58 9ft 6in	9-35g	2 Piece	£329.99	£279.99
SG58 9ft 6in	12-46g	2 Piece	£349.99	£299.99

Svendsen teams up with Henry Gilbey & Mads Grosell...
Henry Gilby & Mads Grosell have designed this amazing range of Bass rods, one of the most highly anticipated launches of 2021. Thousands of hours of testing & casting lures from the shore in various conditions have gone into the development of these rods & lures.

SG55 • SeaGuide CCS guide • Savage Gear Competition Reel Seats
PRECISION LURE SPECIALIST RODS
Perfectly balanced rods made for distance and precision casting with lures from the shore.

			RRP	NOW
SG55 9ft	9-35g	2 Piece	£164.99	£139.99
SG55 9ft 6in	9-35g	2 Piece	£169.99	£144.99
SG55 9ft 6in	12-46g	2 Piece	£179.99	£149.99

Watch the Henry Gilbey Video

FIIISH LEURRES

Choice of over 100 Fiiish Lures on our website

BLACK EEL NEW for 2020 — Khaki and Cloudy White with 40g leaded head

BLACK MINNOW — Khaki, Blue and Gold / Blue 140 and 120 with leaded heads of 40g and 25g

see the 4 VIDEOS on our website

We also stock Candy Shrimp Crazy Paddle Tail Crazy Sand Eel Mud Digger Accessories

SAVAGE GEAR — it's a savage world

SALTWATER LURE REELS

SG56
Built with a strong, lightweight aluminium body and a Carbon Reinforced Composite rotor, the reel is designed to deliver top performance time and time again. Features 6+1 sealed steel ball bearings, high-performance carbon drag system and our proprietary Dura Grease - all of which combine to help make the reel saltwater resistant.
5 BEARINGS · ALB · 7 BEARINGS
8 Models available - 4000, 5000, 6000, 8000, 10000, 14000, 14000H, 18000
£114.99 - £164.99

SG58
A reel with a unique coating that can easily withstood 500 hours of being sprayed with saltwater in testing. Savage Gear's new SG58 reel, complete with SW500 coating, is saltwater resistant in other ways too. Features sealed 8+1 steel ball bearings, sealed drag system, lightweight and strong aluminium body and Carbon Reinforced Composite rotor.
5 BEARINGS · ALB · 9 BEARINGS
8 Models available - 4000, 5000, 6000, 8000, 10000, 14000, 14000H, 18000
£124.99 - £194.99

FIIISH LEURRES

Candy Shrimp · Power Tail · Mud Digger · Crazy Paddle Tail · Crazy Sand Eel

SAVAGE GEAR — it's a savage world

"Mads and Henry have done an incredible job, not just creating the rods but crafting an entire range of product positioned specifically for the UK and Ireland's army of bass anglers." Richard Taylor, boss of Svensden

SANDEEL V2 SINKING LURES
New lure designed by Henry Gilby

12cm	22g	2+1	£6.99
14cm	33g	2+1	£7.99
15.5cm	46g	2+1	£8.99
17.5cm	65g	2+1	£9.99
11.5cm	22g	2+1 Weedless	£8.99
13cm	31g	2+1 Weedless	£9.99

6 Colour Options

Working with Henry Gilbey, Savage have produced an amazing new range of soft plastics. Read his blog on our website

SANDEEL PENCIL SW SINKING LURES
The new Shallow Water version for 2021

9cm	13g	£7.99
12.5cm	19g	£9.99
15cm	30g	£10.99

5 Colour Options

8 Colour Options

SANDEEL PENCIL SINKING LURES
The new Shallow Water version for 2021

9cm	13g	£7.99
12.5cm	19g	£9.99

DAIWA — BASS LURE RODS

Fishing rods for sea bass fishing

Sandstorm Bass Spinning Rods
• Premium Carbon Blanks • Fixed Spool DPS Reel Seat • Seaguide Deep Drawn Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Ring • Split EVA Grip Handle

	RRP	NOW
11ft 6in 28-84g	£120	from £99

2 PIECES

SALTIST - Bass Spinning Rods
• HVF High Volume Fibre • X45 Technology

		RRP	NOW
8ft	10-35g	£170	£139
8ft 6in	10-35g	£175	£145
9ft	10-35g	£180	£149

SALTIST - Spinning Rods

		RRP	NOW
10ft	14-60g	£145	£119
11ft 6in	28-84g	£150	£125

2 PIECES

Whisker - Bass Spinning Rods
Designed to cover the multitude of fishing styles, across lure and bait with monofil or braid

			RRP	NOW
8ft	Medium-Heavy	5-40g	£170	£137.99
9ft	Medium-Heavy	10-40g	£180	£141.99
10ft	Heavy	10-60g	£190	£151.99
11ft	Heavy	10-60g	£200	£159.99

2 PIECES

DAIWA — KENZAKI

"Nothing short of superb" Sea Angler Review, June 2019
Read the review by **DAVID BARHAM** on our website

BG Magsealed Spinning Reel
7 Models - RRP £180-£225 from **£139.99**

Super Kenzaki FS (Fixed Spool) Boat Rod
6-12lb, 6-15lb, 12-20lb, 15-25lb, 20-30lb or 30-50lb
7', 7'6" or 8'
RRP £180 **£139.99**

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

SHIMANO — SALTWATER LURE REELS

VANFORD	13 MODELS	from £179.99
VANQUISH	9 MODELS	from £369.99
STELLA FK (NEW)	14 MODELS	from £599.99
TWIN POWER FD	11 MODELS	from £299.99
TWIN POWER XDFA	6 MODELS	from £334.99
TWIN POWER SW-C	11 MODELS	from £349.99
STELLA SW-C	14 MODELS	from £679.99

SHIMANO — SALTWATER LURE REELS

SOCORRO	4 MODELS	from £94.99
STRADIC C14+	2 MODELS	from £154.99
STRADIC FL	11 MODELS	from £154.99
SPHEROS SW	3 MODELS	from £94.99
SPHEROS SW-A (NEW)	8 MODELS	from £164.99
ULTEGRA FC (NEW)	10 MODELS	from £124.99
SARAGOSA SW-A	8 MODELS	from £179.99

SHIMANO — STAND-UP BOAT RODS

Fishing rods for sea fishing

TLD - A Stand-Up Boat Rods
This rod is the perfect choice when you want to fish for big tuna or shark.
• XT60 + Biofibre blank • Machined from marine grade aluminum and anodized to prevent corrosion.

	RRP	NOW
1.67m20lb	£114.99	£99.99
1.67m30lb Roller	£189.99	£169.99
1.67m50lb Roller	£194.99	£174.99
1.67m80lb Roller	£194.99	£174.99

2 PIECES

TYRNOS - A stand-Up Boat Rods
• Ideal for UK Shark Fishing • ALPS heavy duty SIC lined guides

		RRP	NOW
1.65m	30lb	£224.99	£199.99
1.65m	50lb	£234.99	£209.99
1.65m	80lb	£249.99	£234.99

2 PIECES

TIAGRA - Hyper Stand-Up Boat Rods
• High pressure carbon blanks • AFTD guides • Pacific Bay Reelseat

		RRP	NOW
1.75m	30lb	£359.99	£329.99
1.73m	50lb Bent Butt	£379.99	£349.99
1.6m	80lb Bent Butt	£474.99	£439.99

1 PIECE

TIAGRA - Ultra Game Stand-Up Boat Rods
Shimano's flahship trolling rod with the latest carbon technology - Spiral X + Hi Power X

		RRP	NOW
5ft 4in	50lb	£604.99	£579.99
5ft 4in	80lb	£604.99	£579.99

1 PIECE

SHIMANO BOAT REELS

TLD	6 Models	from £109.99
TORIUM HG	2 Models	from £159.99
TYRNOS	6 Models	from £169.99
SpeedMaster LD II	4 Models	from £199.99
TIAGRA	4 Models	from £469.99

DAIWA — BOAT RODS

Fishing rods suitable for boat trips

Seahunter Z Boat Rods - 2 piece - 4 Models.....from **£54.99**
Saltist Boat Rods - 2 piece - 3 Models.....from **£139.99**
AMAZING OFFER
Tournament Boat Rods - 2 piece - 5 Models..... RRP £185 from **£149**
Saltiga Boat Rods - 2 piece - 10 Models.....from **£199.99**
Kenzaki Boat Rods - 2, 3 & 4 piece - 13 Models from **£129.99**

DAIWA — BOAT REELS

Fishing reels for sea fishing

Sealine Slosh	Boat reel	from £89.99
18 Saltist	Boat reel	from £219.99
Saltist	Level wind reel	from £199.99
20 Saltiga LD	Single & 2 speed boat reels	from £369
16 Saltiga 40H &50H	Satwater multiplier reels	RRP £520 NOW £299

4 MODELS · 5 MODELS · 3 MODELS · 20 MODELS · AMAZING OFFER

Uttings Ltd. provides finance exclusively by Klarna Bank AB (publ). Finance is only available to permanent UK residents aged >18, subject to status, terms and conditions apply.

anyfish anywhere Blue Label Range

These rods offer exceptional performance both in terms of casting and fishing at a price point that makes them very accessible.

four&bait rod mk2

Surfcasting Rods	RRP	OUR PRICE
13ft 3-5oz Fixed Spool	£205	£179.99
13ft 3-5oz Multiplier	£205	£179.99
14ft 3-5oz Fixed Spool	£215	£189.99
14ft 3-5oz Multiplier	£215	£189.99

six&bait rod mk2

Surfcasting Rods	RRP	OUR PRICE
13ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£235	£199.99
13ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£235	£199.99
14ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£245	£199.99
14ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£245	£199.99
15ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£255	£209.99
15ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£255	£209.99

anyfish anywhere NEW FOR 2022

"it has to be one of the most powerful rods I've ever had the pleasure of casting; it's absolutely brutal. The tip speed is immense and when the timing all comes together perfectly the rod's performance is totally exquisite."
Paul Fenech, Sea Angler Magazine

PRO RED LABEL SERIES

The worlds first truly Professional standard beach fishing rods

NEW FOR 2022

Grand Prix Pro Mk2
This new slimmed down version is lighter by about 3oz's and has a 24mm butt + Reducer.
Multiplier 13ft 10in - Casts 4-7oz (150-200g) — RRP £550 NOW £469.99

Estuary Rods MK2

	RRP	NOW
11ft - Casts 30-100g	£220	£189.99
12ft - Casts 30-100g	£225	£199.99

Tournament GBFS Pro MK2
Fixed Spool 14ft + Reducer
Casts 4-8oz (112-225g) — RRP £525 NOW £459.99

READ THE REVIEW ON OUR WEBSITE

Tournament Match Pro MK2
Multiplier 13ft 11in + Reducer
Casts 4-7oz (125-200g) — RRP £525 NOW £469.99

SHIMANO SURF RODS

Fishing rods for beach fishing

SPEEDMASTER Lite Rod + 2 Tips

- High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness & casting distance
- Fuji Fazlite K Type anti-tangle guides
- Fuji DPS reel seat.
- Ultra sensitive solid tip design
- Extra fast action for increased tip speed when casting.

	RRP	NOW
13ft 120g / 4.25oz	£194.99	£159.99

SPEEDMASTER - BXG Surf Rods

- HPC200+NANO technology

			RRP	NOW
14ft	Tubular	225g	£204.99	£164.99
14ft	Solid	225g	£204.99	£164.99
14ft	Hybrid	225g	£204.99	£164.99
14ft 6in	Tubular	225g	£214.99	£174.99
14ft 6in	Solid	225g	£214.99	£174.99
14ft 6in	Hybrid	225g	£214.99	£174.99

SPEEDMASTER - Beach Rods

High Modulus Full Carbon + HPC blank with Nanosheet technology produces lighter, stronger blank with increased responsiveness and casting distance.

			RRP	NOW
14ft 9in	Solid + 3 Tips	120g / 4oz.	£214.99	£179.99
15ft 3in	Solid	150g / 6oz.	£214.99	£149

SHIMANO SURF RODS

Fishing rods for beach fishing

STC - Travel Surf Rods

- 6 Pieces
- Blank material: XT60 + NANO
- Reel seat: Shimano DPS
- Guide type: Shimano Stainless Steel Hardlite
- Number of guides: 9
- Packaged in a hardcase tube

	RRP	NOW
13ft 225g	£224.99	£199.99
14ft 225g	£249.99	£229.99

SURF LEADER ULTRA - BX Surf Rods

The flagship in surf casting rods with unbelievable distance casting ability

			RRP	NOW
13ft 11in	Tubular	225g	£484.99	£399.99
13ft 11in	Solid	225g	£484.99	£399.99
14ft 9in	Tubular	225g	£484.99	£399.99
14ft 9in	Solid	225g	£484.99	£399.99

ULTEGA - BX Surf Rods

Hi-Power X construction for reduced blank twist and greater rod strength - a true casting machine

			RRP	NOW
13ft 11in	Tubular	225g	£299.99	£264.99
13ft 11in	Solid	225g	£299.99	£264.99
14ft 9in	Tubular	225g	£309.99	£269.99
14ft 9in	Solid	225g	£309.99	£269.99

SHIMANO SURFCASTING REELS

NEW

Aerlex 10000XSB Surf Casting Reel	Speedmaster 14000XS Reel	Ultegra XSD 5500 Surf Reel / Big Pit Reel	Ultegra 14000 XSD Reel	Ultegra XSE 10400 Reel	Ultegra CI4+ 14000 XSC Reel
RRP £94.99	RRP £129.99	RRP £149.99	RRP £174.99		RRP £279.99
£69.99	£99.99	£129.99	£139.99	£159.99	£229.99

SHIMANO SURFCASTING REELS

NEW

Surfleader Ci4+ Reel	Power Aero 14000 XSB Reel	Fliegen 35SD Reel	Bull's Eye 9120 Surf Reel	Bull's Eye 9100 Surf Reel	Aero Technium MgS XSD 14000 Reel
RRP £284.99	RRP £379.99	RRP £419.99	RRP £379.99	RRP £379.99	NEW FOR 2022
£229.99	£319.99	£349.99	£349.99	£349.99	£619.99

DAIWA SURF REELS for 2022

Fishing reels for beach fishing

Shorecast - 5000B	Shorecast - 6000B	20 Crosscast 35 SCW 5000C QD	20 Crosscast 45 SCW 5000C QD	19 Emblem Surf 45 SCW QD	20 T Basia 45 SCW 5000C QD
Fixed spool surf reel	Fixed spool surf reel	Surf reel	Surf reel	Surfcasting reel	Surf reel
RRP £89.99 £79.99	RRP £89.99 £79.99	RRP £110 £89.99	RRP £135 £109.99	RRP £185 £159.99	RRP £675 £559.99

DAIWA MULTIPLIER SURF REELS

7HT Millionaire Tournament	7HT Millionaire Mag	7HT Millionaire Mag Super Tuned	SL20SH Sealine Slosh	SL30SH Sealine Slosh
RRP £210 £149.99	RRP £375 £269.99	RRP £560 £399.99	RRP £130 £89.99	RRP £130 £89.99

SONIK GRAVITY X5 HT

- Unground carbon finish at rod joints makes it easier to take apart after use
- White hollow carbon tip for easy bite detection in poor light conditions
- Fuji corrosion control frames provide 7 times more corrosion resistance
- Shrink wrap on the lower handle to improve grip whilst casting
- Super lightweight high modulus carbon blank
- X5 multi-directional nanofibre tip section lay-up
- Fuji Alconite K Series guides
- Fuji DPS reel fitting

NEW

"It's an absolutely fantastic shore rod The ultimate power is utterly immense and evident during the casting process"
Paul Fenech - Sea Angler review issue 566 Jan/Feb '19

A true all rounder...

	RRP	
14ft - 5-7oz - 2 Piece	£329.99	£249.99
15ft 4in - 4-8oz - 3 Piece	£349.99	£259.99

DAIWA SURF RODS

Fishing rods for beach fishing

AIR SURF - Surf Rods

- SVF and X45
- Mega Top Carbon Hybrid Tip
- Guides: Fuji K Guide with Alconite (Multiplier)
- Guides: Fuji LC with Alconite (Fixed Spool)

		RRP	NOW
13ft 6in Multiplier	2 Piece 4-8oz.	£480	£369.99
14ft 2in Multiplier	2 Piece 4-8oz.	£505	£389.99
15ft 3in Fixed Spool	3 Piece 3-7oz.	£525	£399.99

SALTIST - Surf Rods

		RRP	NOW
12ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£210	£169
13ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£235	£189
14ft 2in Multiplier	100-200g	£240	£195
14ft	Fixed Spool	84-150g...	£245 £195
14ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz.	£255 £199
15ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz.	£270 £199

TOURNAMENT - PRO Surf Rods NEW

		RRP	NOW
11ft 6in Bass Fixed Spool	1-3oz.	£250	See
13ft 6in Multiplier	3-7oz.	£330	Website
14ft 2in Multiplier	4-8oz.	£350	

TOURNAMENT - HT Surf Rods

14ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz.	£315 £249
15ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz.	£335 £269

SONIK SURF REELS

NEW

SKS 8000
Designed to give smooth long casts, the large handle helps to speed gear and fish back to the beach.
RRP £49.99 £39.99

AVX 10,000
Superbly smooth & highly functional reel with slow oscillation & long coned spool for super smooth line lay and ultra-long distance casts.
RRP £149.99 £99.99

DOMINATOR X 10,000
Built to withstand the demands of harsh saltwater environments the massive 18kg micro adjust drag will cope with battling large fish in tough conditions..
£79.99

AKIOS SURFCASTING REELS

Fishing reels for beach fishing

Fury FX8	Fireloop	The Guvnor GUV GX8	Air Loop R8 / R10	Utopia CX8 / SX8	Ironloop AK100
Fixed spool reel	Fixed spool reel	Fixed spool surf reel	Long cast fixed spool reel	Fixed spool reel	Fixed spool reel
RRP £74.99 £64.99	RRP £109.99 £87.99	RRP £149.99 £99	R8 - RRP £145.99 £114.99 10 - RRP £154.99 £134.99	CX8 - RRP £129.99 £114.99 SX8 - RRP £169.99 £144.99	RRP £229.99 £199

AKIOS FEEL the FURY

FURY FX420

CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE

The AKIOS FURY is sure to set new standards, the rod looks and behaves fantasticallybeing tested for over 6 months. The AKIOS FURY rod series offers unbelievable value! Made from high modulus carbon fibre, incorporating a spliced tip, SeaGuide quality guides and reel seats, it is a true GEM. It's sure to become a best seller's in the Surf market in the U.K. around Europe and further afield.

	RRP	NOW
14'/4.2m - 100-180g (4-6oz)	£149.99	£129.99
15'/4.6m - 100-180g (4-6oz)	£149.99	£129.99

AKIOS ENDURANCE PRO RS2

A VERSATILE DUO... IN ONE!

- SENSITIVE HYBRID TIP OR POWER TIP

3 PIECE (Plus extra tip section)
4.26m/14ft • 112-225g/4-8oz

Specifically designed for the modern shore angler that demands versatility without compromising on performance, the dual tipped AKIOS ENDURANCE PRO is built around a high modulus HMX40T carbon blank that generates a remarkable amount of casting power.

DUALTIP

RRP £269.99 £219.99

AKIOS AIRSPEED SURF 435 MKII BLACK EDITION

THE BEST JUST GOT EVEN BETTER...

CONTINENTAL • 3 PIECE • 4.35m/14.6ft
112-225g/4-8oz

Striking looks that will turn the heads of envious anglers right along the beach, but more importantly, the outstanding casting performance will enable baits to be sent out further and cover a wider expanse of ground than ever before.

RRP £379.99 £319.99

AKIOS AIRPOWER RXP 435

THE THREE PIECE BEAST!

CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE • 4.35m/14ft 6in
• 120-225g/4-8oz

Arguably the most powerful three-piece continental style rod on the market, the AKIOS AIRPOWER has been designed with one thing in mind, to offer EXTREME casting capabilities. With its insanely powerful high modulus HMX46T carbon construction, progressive action and lightning fast recovery, the rod sets new standards for modern three-piece rods.

HIGH MODULUS NRG • - HMX46T CARBON BLANK
HYBRID / SPLICED CARBON • TIP FOR ULTIMATE BITE DETECTION

RRP £439.99 £339.99

E+OE Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability

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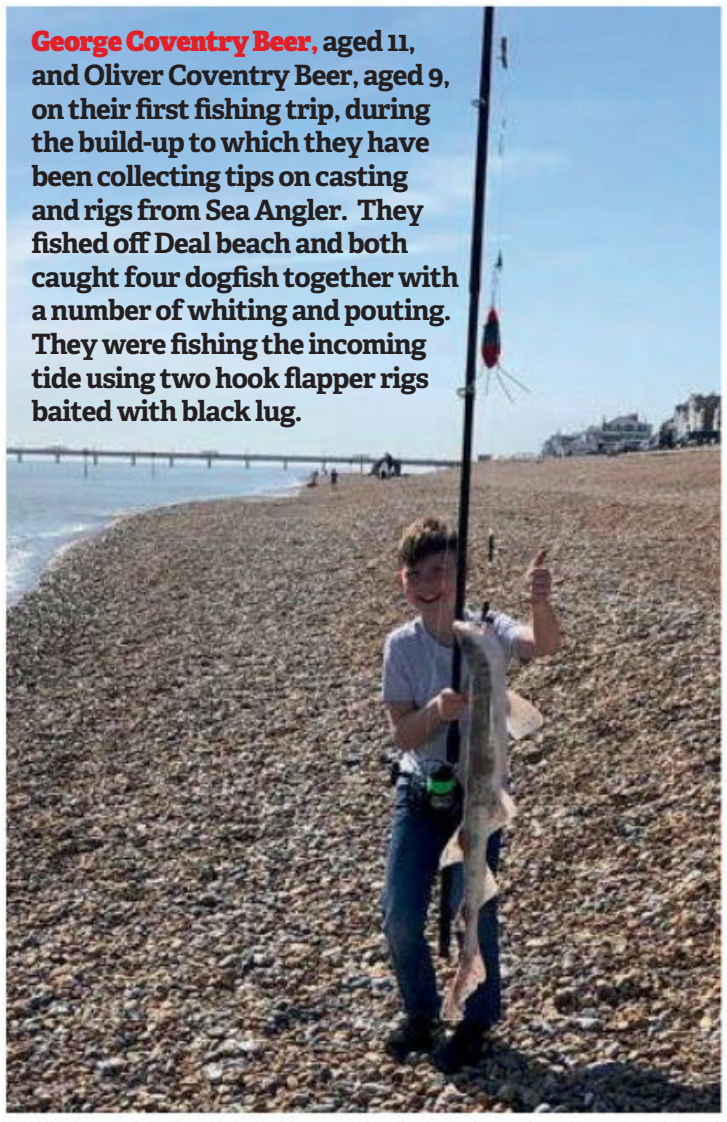
YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its many younger readers

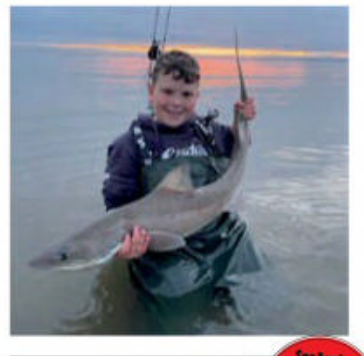


George Coventry Beer, aged 11, and Oliver Coventry Beer, aged 9, on their first fishing trip, during the build-up to which they have been collecting tips on casting and rigs from Sea Angler. They fished off Deal beach and both caught four dogfish together with a number of whiting and pouting. They were fishing the incoming tide using two hook flapper rigs baited with black lug.

▲ **Shia Tabley**, aged nine, fishing off a local mark on Lepe beach during a fun session learning the ropes and using his first ever fishing rod with micro hooks and bits of ragworm to target wrasse.

▲ Nine-year-old **Ameerah Bouhmid** went out fishing on April 14th on a boat from Beer in Devon with skipper Stuart Pike. She caught some whiting, pouting and pollock. Her best fish was this pollock which weighed approximately 8lband was the biggest fish of the day.

◀ **Nevaeh** caught this 4lb 6oz thornback caught on a crab/squid wrap off Penarth whilst aboard Squid Lips with her grandad. It was one of the 26 caught which included many double figure conger, thornbacks and bull huss.



◀ **Harley Thompson**, aged 10, from Jarrow, caught this 14lb 4oz smoothound on crab from the Morecombe area

▲ A brace of smoothhounds (11.4lb and 9lb) caught by **Henley Donnan** off one of his local beaches in Cumbria. Both were caught on fresh peeler crab and on a up and over rig.

▶ **Anthony Evans,** aged 15, from Newport, fishing on Tuskar 2 skippered by Haden Ross out of Cardiff caught his first blonde ray on squid and ragworm weighing 13lb 3oz.

In association with

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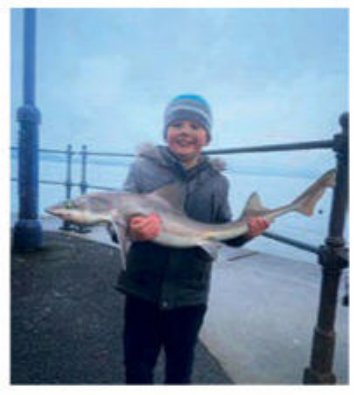
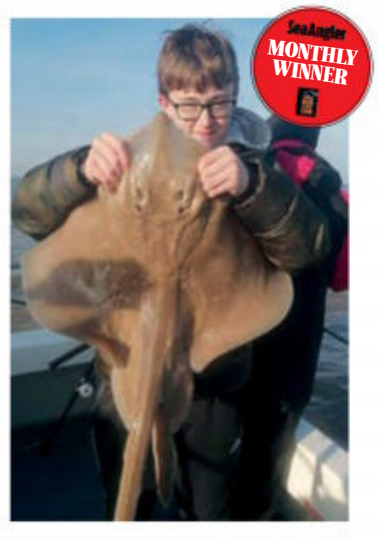
▼Six-year -old **Jackson Evans'** first hound of 2022, caught on peeler crab at Mumbles in Swansea.





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Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from **Fishingmegastore.com** which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

■ Send your Young Rods entries by email to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

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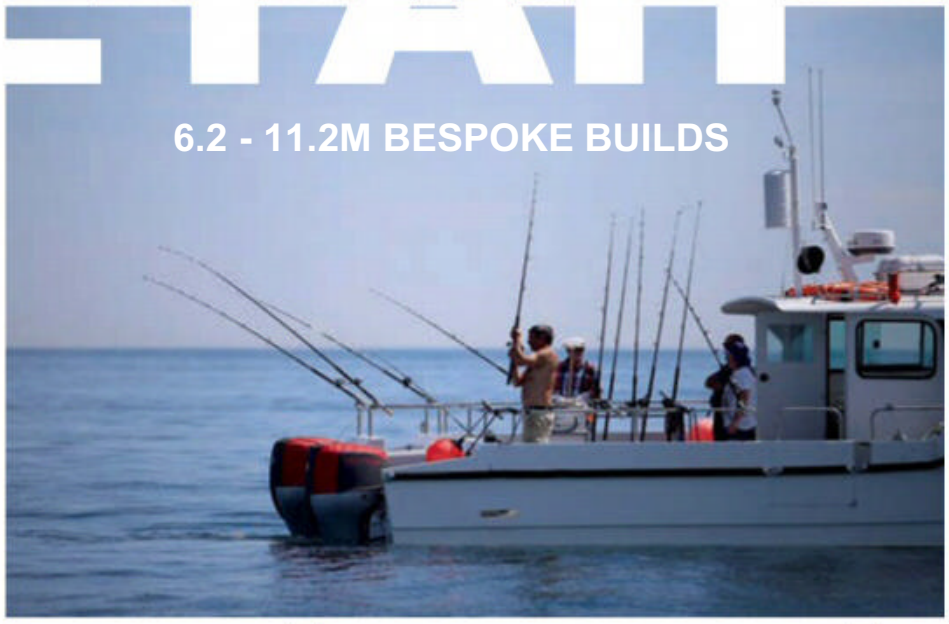

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Words by
SHAUN CONLANE
Photography by
LIAM GUNN

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

With a vision to turn one young man's angling dream into a reality – one group of friends exceeded their wildest expectations and had the skate fishing trip of a lifetime

Harley Thompson and his 106lb skate

Sea angling is a frustrating sport for many. We all hope something exceptional happens for us, but this seldom comes true, or reaches the height of our expectations and ambitions. The same thing plays out through the eyes of most human beings in almost all walks of life; few of us reach the pinnacle of our desire and experience those moments. This is a story of some kindred spirits with a dream of seeing the extraordinary and having a moment and memory they'd be able to treasure forever.

SOWING THE SEED

Ryan Thompson, Harley Thompson, Liam Gunn, Paul Wastell and I all got talking at the European Open Beach Championships back in February this year. Harley had come second in the juniors with a lovely bass. We were all beaming, seeing the youngster's delight and perhaps having flashbacks to our own childhood memories and what got us well and truly hooked on this magical thing that is fishing. I turned to Harley and said, 'It must be a dream come true at such a big event to get up there amongst the prizes.' He replied quickly, saying, 'It's all about getting out and enjoying the fishing, having friends around to share it. Anything else is just a bonus.' Perhaps we could all learn a thing or two from the youngster; at just 10 years old he has such a pure outlook on it all. The lad spends as much time as he can out fishing; he's polite, kind, encourages others and simply has a passion for his angling and adventure. He is living and breathing this magnificent hobby that we all share and love and his passion is infectious. As a group, we all chatted excitedly in the aftermath of the EOCB about the prospect of chasing future fish in locations like Norway, and the conversation descended into fishing tales from days gone by. We asked Harley what he'd love to catch. Without hesitating the little chap told us he'd love to get after a common skate. But he also told us, with trepidation in his voice, that he wasn't sure he could handle one at his age. Ideas are infectious. His father, Ryan, had a dream to get one for himself, and he experienced many ups and downs until the task was completed. Harley had lived this adventure through his father's eyes.

GAME ON

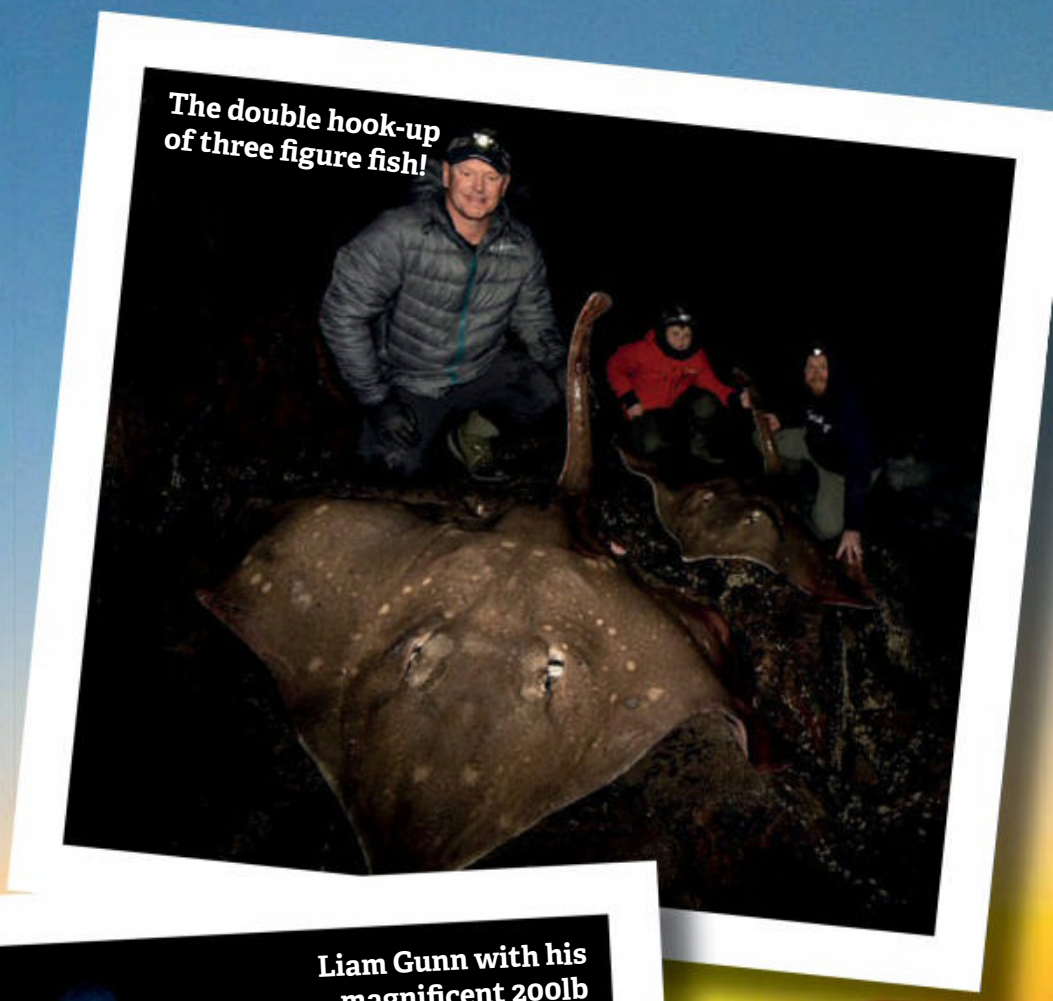
On the way home, almost the whole seven-hour drive back to Aberdeen, the chatter between Liam and I had been about how we could make the wee man's dream come true. The task itself seemed almost insurmountable for a 10-year-old, and to be honest, its conclusion would be uncertain. Yet we decided if there was even the smallest of chances he could do it we should try. It didn't have to be a huge one, and we knew some spots that throw up 30lb-50lb fish, which may be manageable.

After returning from Scotland a group chat was formed and we all began planning an adventure to Scotland's majestic highlands and islands. Tides, weather, barometric pressure, and suitable dates were all discussed. We all became preoccupied with rig making and preparation in the days and weeks leading up to our planned escapades. The video calls, audio notes, and banter back and forth ensured that our enthusiasm was sky high when we hopped into vehicles and began the journey. Ryan, Harley and Paul set off from north east England, with Liam and I heading west from Aberdeen. By Thursday evening, we had rendezvoused and set up for the first short session. The weather looked almost perfect, even providing a nice breeze to keep the incessant midges at bay! The scenery was fit for a Rabbie Burns poem ▶

I wasn't sure of the size, but as soon as I got a glimpse, I gulped. I think we all gasped, it was enormous

and excitement was churning in the pits of our stomachs. This is the ultimate UK adventure; you're chasing the largest specimens available from the shore and seeing the most visually stunning coastlines that, in my biased opinion, the UK has to offer the intrepid angler. Trips like this are always worthwhile. Even if you blank you've still seen and experienced something that people pay to go and see without rods.

Upon arrival at the first venue, we were blessed with a crystal clear, star-speckled night sky with a slight easterly wind, which caused a gentle ripple across the water's black surface. I heard a quote recently where someone said that if you believe something is your destiny, it almost becomes self-fulfilling. This trip had such an heir of positive energy and expectation; it all seemed to be conspiring to make something happen for us. As Liam and I were removing the rods from the back of the car, a van's headlights shone up the track toward us. Ryan, Paul and Harley had arrived, right on schedule. We greeted each other like long lost relatives, grabbed our gear and set about getting baits out. Immaculately presented baits and rigs were cast out; I glanced along the bank at all the Century carbon, left and right. I don't think there has been so many Eliminators in one place outside of the factory! We had the T700s, T800s, T900s and T1000s. Harley also had a Fireblade out. We all had powerful reels, capable of coping with the mammoth fish that lurk in these murky lochs. Some of the lads had spurdogs and thornbacks in mind; cocktails of mackerel and Bluey flew out. The others only wanted a common skate. Forty-five minutes to an hour passed when Paul had the meekest of taps on his T700, which turned out to be the first dogfish of the trip. Time started to pass in a blink; everyone had their heads down, focussed and baiting up increasingly regularly. There was a mellow feeling. I'm not entirely sure if this was due to the ambience of the setting and the soothing sound of the nearby stream trickling into the loch or the fact that we were all tiring. After all, it had been a long old day. As with a tiring mind, negativity can easily creep in. Liam and I chatted about whether this mark would deliver the fish or not. It became very slow going indeed. At the very moment our enthusiasm and belief reached its lowest ebb, Ryan had a cracking pull down on his T800, and a fish was definitely on. As I made my way toward him in anticipation of a decent fish breaking the surface, he called out that it's off. Oh no! This is the nature of fishing; it teases you, toys with your emotions and dashes your dreams. The lure of the highest highs is always punctuated with the crushing of spirits at some time or another. It was just Ryan's turn now, just not in the way we expected. I stood waiting for his rig to break the surface with bare hooks and instead, he had one of the smallest dogfish most of us had ever seen, just six inches long. The rest of us were practically rolling around on the floor, sides hurting with the eruption of laughter. Such a thing happens to us all at some time or another. It does a great job of humbling even the most profound of egos. As we were ripping Ryan over the comedy, we inspected the tiny dog,. It had bite marks; something far larger had grabbed it, and that's what Ryan had initially been fighting. This reinvigorated us, giving us the appetite to fish on until the small hours when we finally threw the towel in, exhausted, hoping to get some shut eye in the back of the van.


The double hook-up of three figure fish!

Liam Gunn with his magnificent 200lb skate

A NEW DAY

Liam nodded off in no time at all and slept like a log. In contrast, I lay awake, tossing and turning; my body was knackered, but my mind was troubled by how poor the session had been. Being the Scots group, the pressure was resting on our shoulders to produce marks that would yield that magical fish. Considering we live in Aberdeenshire, it's a kind of strange pressure to put on ourselves, as the west is hardly local. However, we just wanted the lads from the northeast to have a great trip, particularly Harley. Sleep seemed to last minutes, though the reality was longer. The guys were soon up and I couldn't lay there a minute longer. To my delight, Ryan had fired up some cracking breakfast baps, making us feel a little more human. The custard and cake for dessert seemed a bit on the peculiar side, but, if truth be known, I probably needed the carbs. Bellies full, positive mental attitudes initiated, we loaded on our gear like Nepalese Sherpas and made our way towards the mark. The weather was nothing short of fantastic at 18-20 degrees, with dry air and not a cloud to be seen. This mark is one of the more difficult to access, and the heat certainly did not make it any easier. This was to be a real team bonding session, everyone gelling and working together to ensure safe passage of ourselves and our gear onto the mark would be a true testament to our flourishing fraternity. In all honesty, I personally felt this was the coming together of something special.

Baits were soon being fired out, and knowing the venue pretty well, my expectations were low in daylight; it tends to throw up the better fish nocturnally. There was another more important reason for arriving early; to make sure we got to fish the most desirable spot. You never know when these venues might get busy. With the internet, everyone has the same idea, and it's the worst thing driving all that way with spiralling fuel prices, only to realise you have another bunch of marauding raiders parked in the best place. You then have another big drive to the next available venue – skate musical chairs. The predicted slow daylight fishing with hardly a tap passed rapidly, thanks to the constant craic from the lads. Harley's one-liners to gee us up were superb; he really has a tremendous sense of humour and camaraderie. The setting sun meant it was time to get the big rigs out. Before long we were under a blanket of absolute darkness. In the true tradition we decided on a pact that the first man or boy to land a skate would have to eat a Bluey head, more of a punishment than a reward, but it spiced things up a bit.

FISH ON

Before long all hell broke loose; Paul's T700 took a proper lunge forward. He lifted into it and Liam shouted, 'skate on'. At that moment, the trip really became real for all of us. Harley was beaming with excitement as he watched Paul's Shimano Stella 10,000 start to have line stripped off it, which caught him completely unaware of the sheer power and weight of a swimming fish of serious size. Paul recomposed himself, turning the fish and getting into a pump and wind rhythm. Harley was spurring him on with words of encouragement. The fish was coming towards him and the rest of us suddenly realised that, however big this fish was, we were going to need to make sure landing happened. I have to say, I was impressed with Paul. He was using a British continental rod effectively. The blank was designed for clean beach work and far smaller fish than this, which would mean Paul was experiencing some tremendous sport and sensation playing this behemoth of a fish. I wasn't sure of the size, but as soon as I got a glimpse, I gulped. I think we all gasped; it was enormous. It was like watching a stealth bomber rising up through the water column. The magnificent beast flapped its wings and turned back to the depths, causing Paul to lose a fair bit of the line he'd worked hard to get back on. Paul appeared somewhat beat up and in total disbelief at what had just happened. It's something many an angler experiences when chasing fish this large; you are not in control, the fish is. Before long, he had the fish again turned, and it was coming back to the surface when the large female skate breached. We were all in awe, aside from Liam, who sprang into action, skilfully guiding the fish onto the rock below. With all breathed easy again; what an effort. A staggering fish lay before us. It was quickly photographed and measured at 66in x 88in, which meant it was around 205lb. The fish was returned, and we all shared the moment watching her flap her wings back down to the depths. I remember that I felt like it was objective completed but I soon realised that our night had only just begun. We congratulated Paul on the fish of a lifetime; he was absolutely buzzing. We all were!

DOUBLE TEAM

I prepared the Bluey for Paul and without hesitating he bit the head off it and started crunching away. 'Good lad', I thought, relieved it wasn't me. Although wouldn't anyone do it for a 200lb magnificent common skate? Staring at our rod tips once again with a sense of expectation, the silence of the night became deafening, each of us willing our rods to fold over. It seemed like only a few minutes had passed, when Ryan announced he was getting a bite. He thought it was a spurdog, only for Liam to watch the bite progress and guess that it was a skate. Ryan poised himself, and after a small run he lifted into the fish and instantly felt it was a skate. Liam was right. Putting a full lock on his Kompressor SS to try and get the fish moving towards him, Ryan really knuckled down and bullied it to the surface in no time at all – 10 minutes, perhaps. At the same time, Paul had his other T700 lurching right over, and he was into another monster which was stripping line. Paul's fish was putting up the kind of scrap we all dream of. It was running him ragged and the struggle was compounded by the energy expended on the 200lb fish a short time ago. Paul was really suffering from the power of this fish, but, inch by inch, he was getting line back, pumping and winding like his life depended on it and before long, we all saw a huge fish surface in the blueish-green torchlit water. He edged his way along the rocks in a trance like focus; it was like Derren Brown had him under hypnosis or something. All he could do was concentrate on landing what would surely be a fish he could tell the grandkids about. Liam, the star that he is, was down on that ledge like a gazelle, promptly landing both fish safely. What on earth had I just witnessed in this manic period? The teamwork to accomplish this was so unselfish, doing things for each other the way it should be amongst anglers who only have a desire for each other to achieve. This is how dreams come true.

Ryan's fish came in at 62in x 80in, which meant 171lb, and Paul's at 68in x 88in, a staggering 211lb. After a short moment and a few pictures, the two fish were slipped back into their dark abyss. The double release was a memorable spectacle. What a truly incredible sight to witness; the trip had already exceeded all expectations. However, if Paul had to eat any more Bluey, I thought he might start growing gills; his skin already had an oily shine to it. We stood in amazement. Harley was telling his Dad how proud he was of him. It was a special moment between father and son, but I thought this usually only happened the other way around! 'Lee would have loved this Dad', said Harley, which choked us all up a bit. Lee was Ryan's best pal and fishing buddy who sadly passed away through illness. At that moment, a shooting star streaked across the sky. I am certain we all wondered if the two things were related. I'd like to think so, and it somehow completed the spectrum of emotions running through us.

Time lapsed into the small hours. I peered around, seeing tired eyes. We were all physically and mentally spent, but we somehow continued on, replaying the events of earlier in the night to lift spirits. I have no idea how, but Harley still seemed to have oodles of enthusiasm and energy. He kept going; his desire for a hook-up was admirable. Just as that ran through my mind, his Kompressor SS shuddered, and a little line peeled off, he snatched the rod and leant into it, and the fish set off on a run. There was an unspoken consensus amongst us that 10-year old Harley may not be able to land the fish; it might just be too much of a task for the lad. We stood right at his side, ready to help should he need us for anything. But Harley had other ideas.

Left to right: Harley Thompson, Shaun Conlane, Paul Wastell and Ryan Thompson

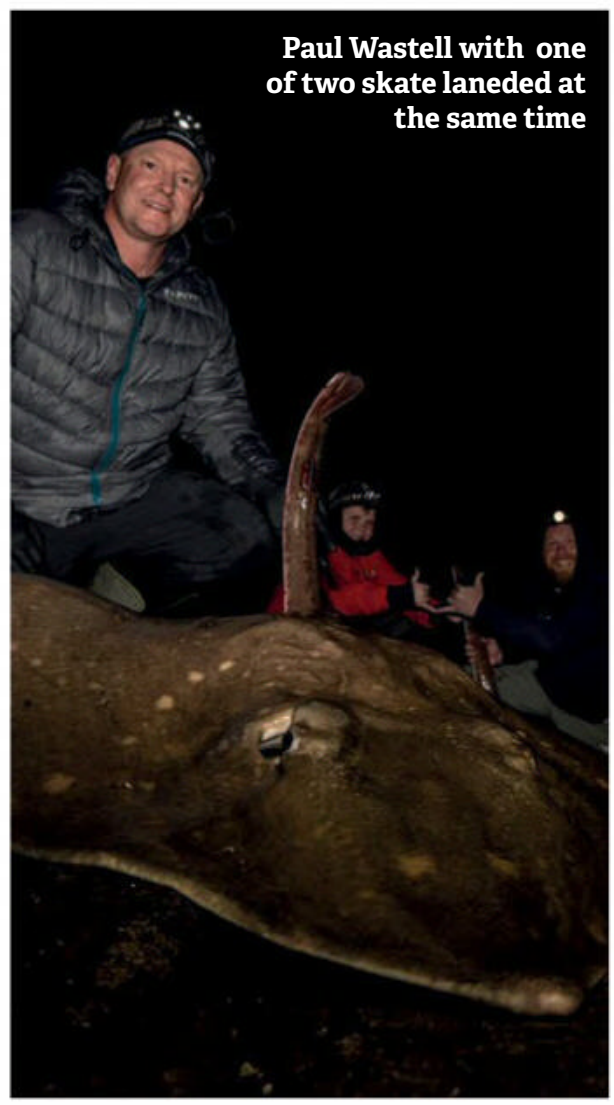
His unflinching will and determination, fuelled by adrenaline, meant he would do everything possible to see this fish break the surface. What I witnessed next was very much like a passage in Ernest Hemingway's Islands in the Stream. One of the young sons has hooked a Marlin. All of the adults are there are around him, but even though he is suffering he wants it so badly that he refuses help. The adults are not sure whether to make the tough call to intervene or let the boy go through what could be considered an initiation ceremony of sorts. Landing a common skate at 10-years old would be an almost impossible task; something not done before. But should it be achieved, the benefits to confidence would be unparalleled. As boys, all we want is to be accepted by the adults; it's a tough process to be one of the guys. Here was Harley in the battle of his life, staring into the darkness, dreaming, hoping, wishing, daring to do what might be beyond his age constraints. During the massive effort to get the fish moving toward him, he slipped down managing to fracture the bottom of the rod, which only added to the chaos. He apologised to Dad (Ryan) but all there was in response were words of encouragement for the little man, not just from Ryan but from all of us. We were all willing this to happen for him; there was a deluge of positive energy and encouragement flowing through the air toward

Bullied up from the depths the giant skate broke the surface

Harley. All of our hopes and dreams rested on him. The fish had taken the line across Paul's lines and it became clear we needed to get all other rods out of the way quickly. I honestly have no concept of time during this period. We were all in this deep focus. The communication between father and son was beautiful to see; the bond and their understanding was so close. To all our relief, Harley had the fish turned and coming towards him, bit by bit. He was heaving with all his might. What was surely a tremendous fish was gradually coming in. You could cut the tension with a knife; our hearts were in our mouths. We were all on the cusp of seeing something special, the dreams of a small boy coming true. As it surfaced, the little man was cool as a cucumber. It had to be at least as heavy as Harley, perhaps heavier. Liam was again waiting in the wings, ready to swoop and land the fish for his little pal. After a few tense seconds a fabulous common skate was safely landed. The atmosphere among us was incredible disbelief and pure euphoria. We all embraced in a group fist bump, letting out Ric Flair type cries and screams that could be heard echoing along the loch. For the briefest shining moment, a little boy became a star and we rejoiced in jubilation. Our emotions poured out and we felt like lords of the rocks. Somebody, please tell me how life can be any better than this?

In the end, Harley's fish was heavier than him; 53in x 69in meant 109lb. A 10-year-old had broken the 100lb barrier. Sheer strength of character, determination, and technique had triumphed over stature or physical prowess. The boy was standing on the shoulders of giants. We were all smiling so much that our faces were aching. What a night!

I wasn't even slightly bothered that I hadn't had a touch all night, but Liam, after his tricky work landing four common skate for others, probably deserved a bite himself by now. We all agreed that he should fire out another octopus and mackerel cocktail on the T1000. We were all like nodding dogs on our seat boxes by now, in the 'long blink' phase that all night fishermen know well. We badly needed sleep, but if there is one thing that can wake a man up, it's a Daiwa Saltiga dogfight with a running drag! Our eyes were again as wide as saucers, Liam was up like a spring salmon to snatch the rod out of the rest, and he was into a good fish. However, the fatigue and a fish moving like a steam train soon had Liam in agony fighting this beast. You really want to be fresh when fighting these loch monsters. The fish had dived deep and suctioned to the seabed, almost the worst outcome. He dug deep, Liam, ever resilient, found a bit more strength to lever it off the ground, slowly heaving a sizable fish up toward him. I have no doubt through Liam's arms and back; it felt like an eternity, it always does, but, before long, a huge skate breached. Another absolute beast on the deck, with this time Ryan keen to return the favour on landing duty.



Paul Wastell with one of two skate laneded at the same time

The fish was 202lb on the chart. A fifth skate of the night and a third over 200lb. We were witnessing nothing short of extraordinary. We all congratulated Liam; smiles again were ear to ear, and we began chatting about what an experience it had been. For the other adults and me, it had been watching Harley listen, learn, and achieve something magical that had made the highlight. You simply can't put a price on moments like this – like-minded people making memories. The trip had enriched us all and fed our souls. It encapsulated everything I love about fishing. ■

Words and photography by JOE WALKER

5 FLIES TO TRY

After last month's Five Reasons To Try The Fly, saltwater flyfishing evangelist, Joe walker, shares his expert advice on the best proven fish-catching flies for novice swffers to try

Saltwater flyfishing is taking off in the UK, of that there is no doubt. An increasing amount of coverage is rightly being devoted to this productive method of sea angling in the mainstream angling press, with much discussion about its merits and the techniques and tackle needed. However, surprisingly little has time has been spent on de-mystifying the business end of things, the flies themselves. There is, in any branch of lure fishing (and that is essentially what a fly is), a huge array of choice, verging on being bewildering.

The cost of an individual fly may not be high, but take it from me, the inevitable 'kid in a candy store' syndrome can kick in, and before you know it you've spent a small fortune on beguiling, enticing, intricate creations in every colour-variant and size imaginable. It's a compulsion driven by a combination of insecurity ("but what if the bass prefer olive and white to orange and black? I'd better get both in all the sizes, just in case") and plain old gut feeling ("Oh, now surely that must catch fish. It looks so, well, fishy!"). In reality, if you go in blind, you acquire a huge selection, spend an inordinate amount of time chopping and changing patterns out on the water, before eventually coming to realise that, despite all the myriad types and variants you have with you, you're actually only consistently catching on a small handful of these.

GURGLER (SURFACE)

This is the fly equivalent to a popper lure. A gurgler is characterised by the buoyant, foam, body that runs along the top side of the hook shank and ends in an up-turned lip at the eye of the hook. It usually has a scruffy under-body and a tail of sorts, and to be honest, rarely looks particularly life-like; at least not to anything on this planet. But that's not the draw here. Like a popper, the Gurgler is all about water displacement, splash and noise. As the fly is retrieved in sharp jerks across the surface, the lip at the front creates a little splash, broadcasting a 'baitfish in distress' signal to any waiting predators. It is particularly effective in calm water where that signal is not diluted by surface wavelets, and when water clarity or visibility is low, and fish like bass are drawn in by vibration rather than hunting by sight. As a result, it's also a good night-time pattern too. Obviously, if bass or mackerel are hitting baitfish right on the surface, the Gurgler is an automatic choice, and it is thrilling to get marauding shoals visibly hitting your fly right on the top – definitely one of the most fun patterns in the flybox! Try it in white (perhaps with some silver or red) for the daytime and all black or black and red for the night. You may not use it a lot, but when you see fish busting on the surface in front of you, you'll be glad you've got it!

To save a lot of time let's try and whittle this down a bit, to at least get you started. Of course, debate over precise patterns will rage until the end of time, as everyone has their favourites, but this will give the novice or first-time 'swffer' a considerable shove in the right direction.

Let's start with the basics: what constitutes a fly, exactly? In very broad terms it's a lure made from fibres, feathers and thread, tied directly onto a hook in order to imitate a natural food source for your target quarry. Of course, these days an ever-increasing amount of synthetic materials are replacing natural ones in fly design, resulting in flies that look just as good, if not better, will cast more easily, and are often more durable, but essentially the general construction remains the same. There are some purists out there who will argue that once you get beyond a certain point, a fly is no longer a fly, and therefore you are lure fishing, not swffing. If you are curious to see what can spark considerable heated debate on this issue, look up 'Gummy Minnow' online. To my mind, it's an effective fly pattern in the right application, but to many it is not really a 'fly' – indeed some get pretty animated about it! We're a funny old lot at times.

Moving on then, you definitely need to know your Clousers from your Gurglers! Much like hard bass lures, flies can be broadly broken down into three categories: surface, unweighted, and weighted. Note that I avoid the 'slow-sinking' and 'fast-sinking' terminology that we use with hard lures. This is simply because where you put the fly in the water column is as much dictated by the line you use as by the fly itself. OK, so you need flies in each category. Why? Simply so you have something that's best suited to wherever the fish are feeding. To keep things simple, let's start from the top – literally!

SURF CANDY/SANDEEL PATTERNS (UNWEIGHTED – FISHED THROUGHOUT THE WATER COLUMN)

This type of fly has proven its worth as a killer pattern for bass for many years, and certainly no swffer should be without them! Essentially, these are sandeel imitation patterns. My favourite is a version called the DNA Baitfish. It gets its name from the material it's made from – a mix of two synthetic fibre blends, called DNA Holofusion. These particular materials create a wonderfully glittery, translucent, slim fly, with plenty of body movement. With large red and black eyes, the DNA Baitfish is remarkably lifelike when jigged through the water, and almost irresistible to any saltwater predator that fancies the odd sandeel on its menu. Being unweighted, the fly is fished at depths dictated by the weight of the flyline itself, but it is generally accepted to be a shallow-water or near-surface pattern fished on a floating line. Colour-wise, a realistic Olive and White is hands-down the best.

Bass do love a sandeel pattern

RAYS MULLET FLY OR MULLET BACH (UNWEIGHTED, SHALLOW WATER)

Another essential. This tiny fly, usually a size 12, consistently racks up fish after fish. Originally a variant of a traditional Welsh trout fly called the Diawl Bach, the Rays Mullet fly (or Mullet Bach as its sometimes called) is a peculiar little offering. The supposition is that it is mistaken for a small shrimp (corophium volutator), common around our muddy shores. Whilst small, these little crustaceans are sometimes present in huge numbers, and bass, mullet and flatfish regularly make them a part of their diet. Indeed, all three species take this fly (five species if you differentiate between all three mullet types). What's more, don't underestimate the small size of this fly; I've seen bass to 6lb, and mullet to 8lb, landed on this pattern! Being small and unweighted, this is a pattern fished in shallow water or in the top two feet. And by shallow, I mean anything down to 6 inches, where surprisingly large fish can be found digging about for the little shrimp it imitates. One notable feature about the pattern is the inclusion of one or two bright red beads at the 'head'. It's thought that the red provides a strike point, and helps the fly stand out amongst the natural food, making it a more obvious target. In fact, the inclusion of a little red is a common theme in many saltwater fly patterns. As an aside, I've found garfish find this hard to resist too!

A couple of variants of the Rays Mullet fly. Note the red theme!

A thin-lipped mullet finds the Rays Mullet fly too much to resist. This is the 'tagged' version for that extra dash of mullet-luring red!

THE TAGGED ROMY'S SANDSHRIMP (UNWEIGHTED, SHALLOW WATER)

4

Right up there with the Ray's Mullet fly, the 'Romy's' has landed more fish than you can shake a rod at! A relatively recent addition to the swffer's armoury, the little glittery, gold, shrimp imitation also has a fluorescent red 'tag' at the head-end. Much like the Ray's fly, the inclusion of a splash of red definitely increases the hit rate. Interestingly, mullet are capable of seeing colours in the ultraviolet spectrum, so the fluoro coloured tag is thought to positively beam out the 'dinner is served' message to peckish shoals. It's especially effective for thin-lips and golden greys in shallow water with a pale or sandy bottom.

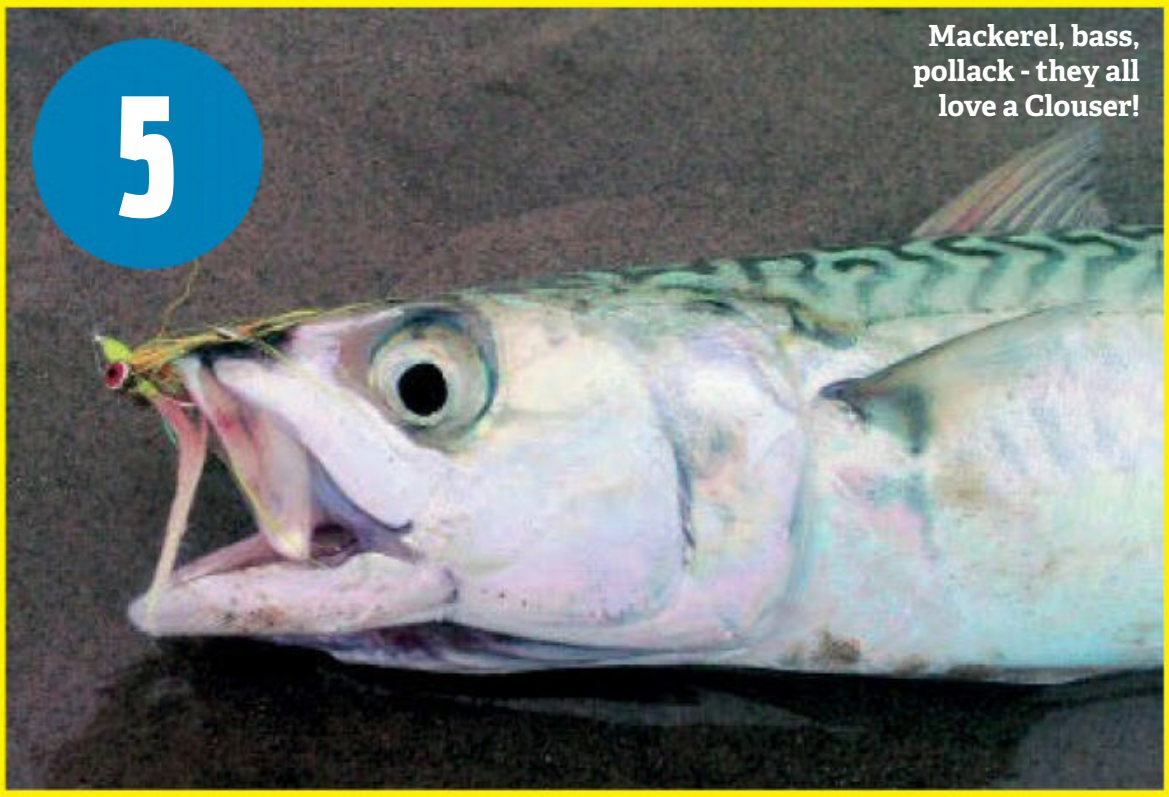
The Spectrashrimp – proven against thicklips

A darker version, the Spectrashrimp, is the go-to pattern for brooding thick-lipped mullet feeding over mud (red-tagged or with blue 'feelers'). Again, don't think these patterns are limited to mullet… Bass will hoover them up. I've watched the dark shape of a lurking bass missile across ten metres of shallow just to hit one of these tiny flies – their eyesight must be extraordinary! It's one of the great thrills of saltwater flyfishing – presenting flies in clear shallow water and being able to see the reaction with absolute clarity. Nothing sets an anglers heart beating faster!

Old faithful. The Tagged Romy's Sandshrimp winkles out yet another

CLOUSER DEEP MINNOW, OR 'CLOUSER' (WEIGHTED – MID-WATER OR EVEN ON THE BOTTOM)

Invented by American fly tier Bob Clouser, this simple weighted pattern composed of usually just two colours of bucktail fibres, a few strands of flash, and some brass or chrome dumbbell 'eyes', is one of the most universally used saltwater baitfish patterns there is. The Clouser has been gracing fly boxes the world over in a myriad of colours for decades, and it is no less effective a pattern now. The little metal 'eyes' tied in towards the front of the fly on the underside mean that the fly fishes point-up (helpful over rough terrain), and adopts an enticing darting, diving movement as it's retrieved sink and draw style. Of all the colours you could possibly have, by far the most consistent catchers in UK waters are olive and white (good for bass and mackerel in daytime), chartreuse and white (effective at dawn and dusk), orange and black (great for pollack and wrasse over rocks and kelp), and all-black at night. Even golden grey mullet and flatfish will take a smaller Clouser, so perhaps this pattern more than any should be the very first one to start your inevitable collection.



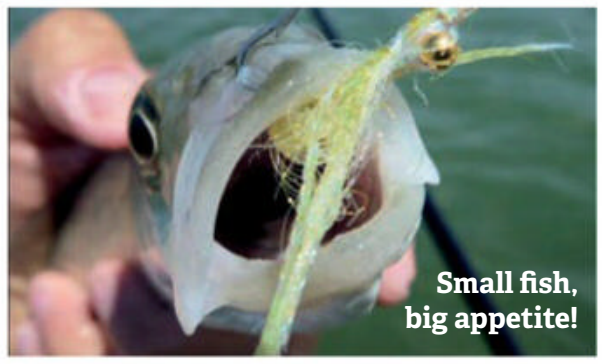
Mackerel, bass, pollack - they all love a Clouser!

Bass love it too! I've seen bass to 7lb take size 12 shrimp flies!

BUT WHAT ABOUT...

Before anyone already familiar with swffing spits out their tea in indignation because I've not included one of their top five, these are simply the flies that have worked best for me and the fellow swffers I've fished with along the south coast of England and Wales. With the coastline of the UK being as vast and varied as it is, there will no doubt be devastatingly good patterns that haven't made my own top-five cut. Certainly, I would include the Deceiver, the Flexi-worm and the Ghostbuster as close runners-up, all deadly on their day.

The Ghostbuster: a floating pattern ideal for mullet and bass feeding in the shallows amongst floating bladderwrack where other flies would foul on the weed


Small fish, big appetite!

SIZE MATTERS

You may have read the above and noted that I've omitted to mention anything about the size of the flies on three out of the five general patterns. Well, it's a topic that always sparks debate, that's for sure! There are two opposing thought processes here; 'bigger the fly, bigger the fish', and 'one more wafer thin mint' for those familiar with the Monty Python sketch. Personally, I tend to subscribe to both! For me it really depends on what's happening at the time. If bass are blitzing sandeels in the shallows, I would tend to start at a size 2 and see what happens. If my fly is being repeatedly snatched by smaller schoolies, I may ramp up to a 1/0. Some people may work the other way round and start big. I like to get a few fish taking first to make sure the pattern is proving itself attractive. Alternately, if mullet and bass are grubbing around in 10 inches of water in the margins, I would forget a large fly and go down to the little patterns to imitate the shrimp or worms they are likely feeding on. Let the choice of fly be dictated by your best guess at what your quarry is (or is likely to be) feeding on, then you can tweak the size to suit.

Interestingly, there's an area of overlap into the world of LRF here too; small flies like the shrimp patterns and weighted Flexi-worms are proving to be perfectly suited to being fished on LRF kit, and flies like Clousers are even catching on drop-shot rigs!

DARK MATTERS!

You may have picked up on the fact that flies best suited to use at night are, in fact, black! That would seem contrary to common sense. Surely they'd need to be as visible as possible, and black is the last colour you'd use? In fact, it makes perfect sense. At night, the only light available for hunting fish is moon and star light. The best way to use such little illumination is to position yourself so your prey is between you and the light-source, therefore exposing its silhouette. In that respect, a bass or pollack looking up will see the distinct silhouette of a black fly against the sky far more clearly than a pale one, so the rule is simple – when it's dark, go dark!

When all's said and done, the dizzying range of flies available for purchase by the aspiring swffer will often herald surprising successes and the inevitable exceptions that prove the rule, but these five basic patterns should form the essential core of your collection. A quick Google search will give you options on where to buy these patterns. Of course, if you get into tying your own flies, then the variations on a theme are almost endless, but if not, try these five. You won't be disappointed! ■

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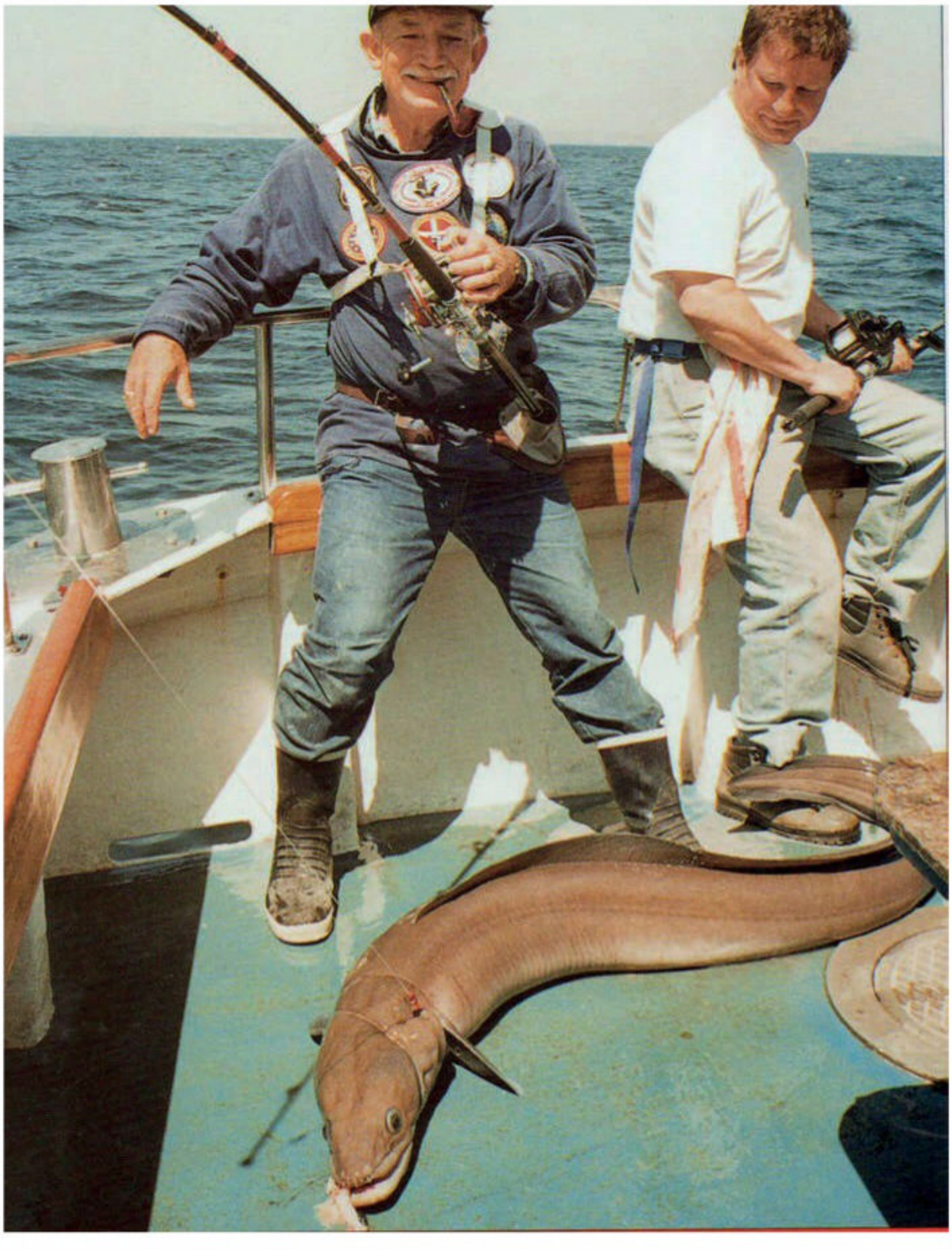
Words and Pictures MIKE MILLMAN

CONGER DIAMOND JUBILEE 1962-2022

As the British Conger Club celebrates its 60th anniversary MIKE MILLMAN tells the inside story of the club's founding, its many initiatives, and the heyday of its membership



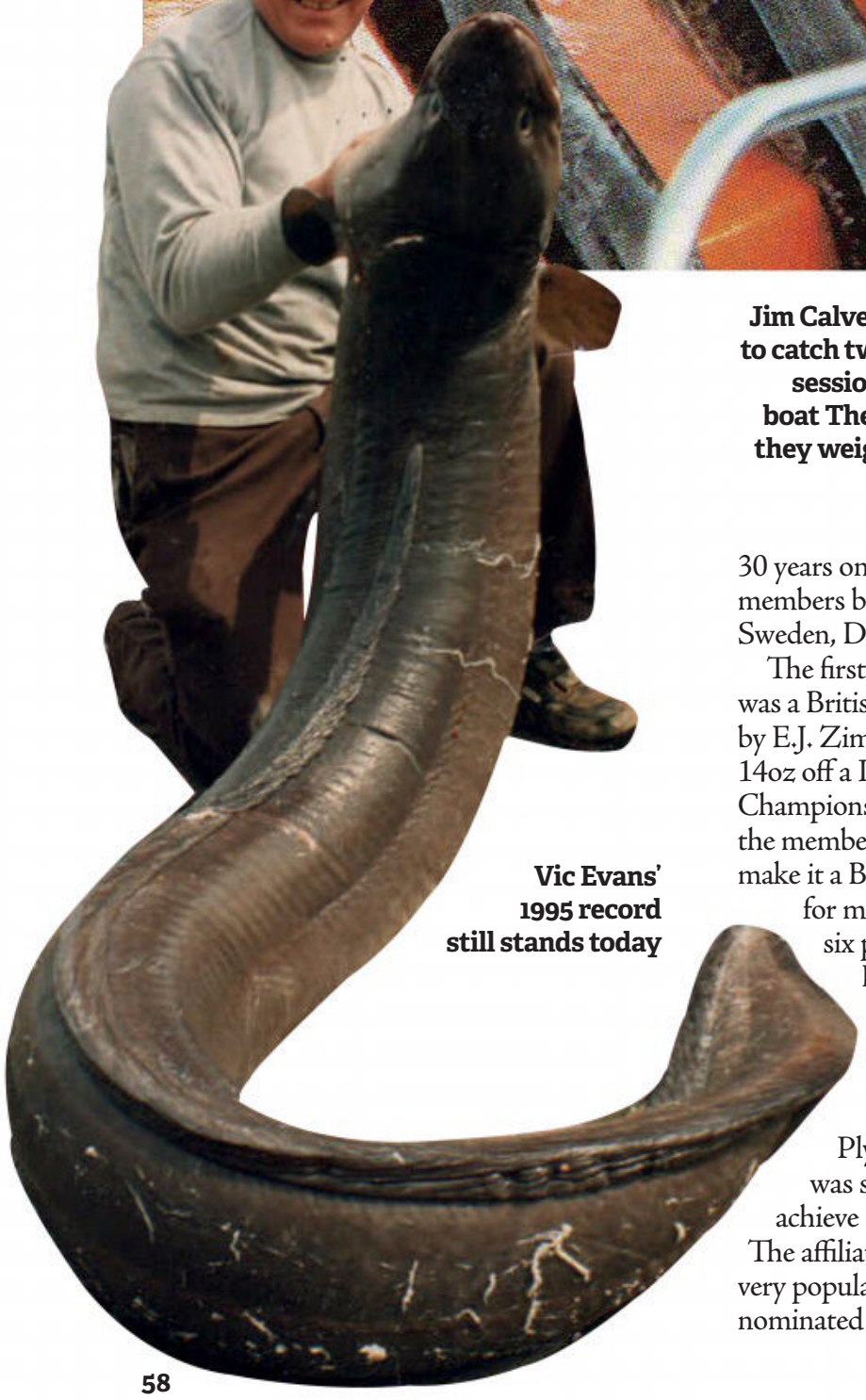
Some time ago in an article I dubbed the conger 'mean, moody, and magnificent' – a fair summing up for a fish that has a touch of mystery about it. Add its ability to swim backwards almost as well as forward, that it has been caught commercially in UK waters to over 200lb, and that huge fish of almost 70lb are available within easy sight of the shore, and you have a quarry that provides tremendous excitement and long-lived memories.

Some of this must have been in the mind of sea angler Mike Connell who served in Bomber Command during the war. He also big game fished around the world. In the 1960s Mike put to the test whether a specialist club exclusively for conger enthusiasts would be successful and solicited the opinions of anglers he knew well who were based on the English Channel coast. He came to a committee meeting of the Plymouth Sea Anglers Club which at that time had 300 members. Among others its secretary, Len Hobbs, and I (who held the records officer role at the time) were enthusiastic supporters. Both of us were eventually elected to the BCC presidency many years apart.

Sometime after that scoping exercise a meeting was convened in Littlehampton and in January 1962 the club was formed. Among those present were Mike and his wife Daphne, charter skipper Dutton Everington and his wife Paula (herself no slouch with a conger rod) and angling writer Alan Wrangles. Diminutive Hetty Eathorne of shark fame, who also had a 70lb conger to her credit, was invited to take the presidency and was pleased to accept. In its first year 58 anglers signed up and, amazingly, ▶

Gibraltar's Ernest Borrell with a 56lb conger taken at the West Rutts reef during the 2002 Championship. He was fishing out of Plymouth from Electric Blue

Jim Calvert of Liverpool is the only member to catch two 100lb conger in the same fishing session. Taken in 1995 from Bill Warner's boat The Mistress at a wreck off Plymouth they weighed 105lb 12oz and 103lb. He made it a trio with another of 70lb!



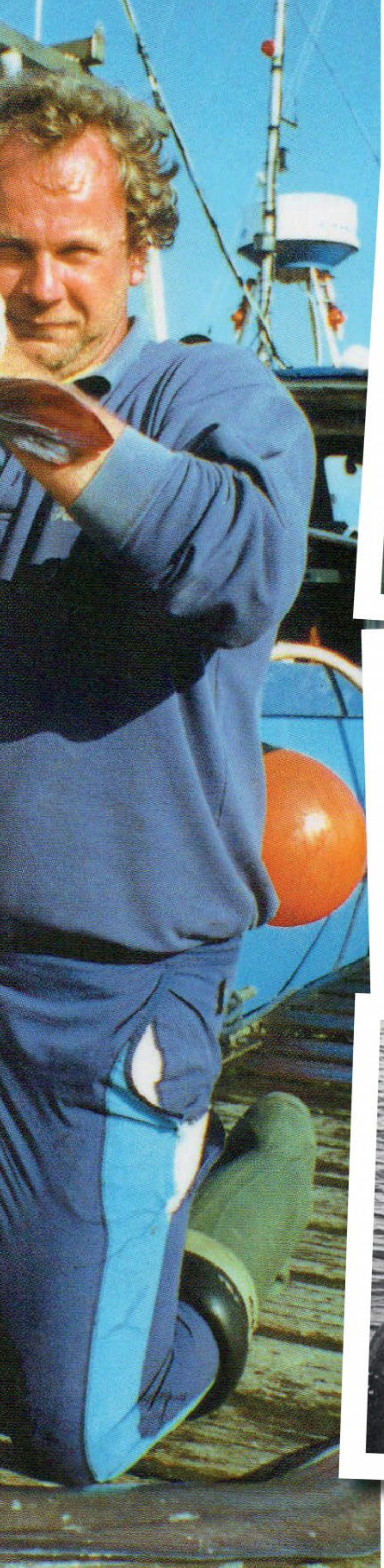
Vic Evans' 1995 record still stands today

30 years on, the figure would top 2000 and have members based in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Gibraltar.

The first competition to be organised was a British Conger Championship won by E.J. Zimmerman who had an eel of 26lb 14oz off a Littlehampton reef. The first eight Championships were open to all comers but as the membership soared it became necessary to make it a British Conger Club Championship for members only with fishing from six ports between Newhaven and Falmouth. For several years it was run on the basis of heats, the winners going forward to a final.

The heaviest fish to win the title weighed 82lb 2oz and was caught off Plymouth. An affiliated club system was soon in place and would ultimately achieve an amazing total of ninety clubs. The affiliated Club Championships proved very popular and teams of four fished from a nominated port. Time has since taken its toll

Brian Haigh of Leeds has the credit of the biggest eel in the Members Championship. Caught off Plymouth it weighed 82lb 2oz



Mike Connell (centre) was guest of honour at the 2003 dinner

▲ The 1967 Championship was fished, as were three others, in association with the Plymouth Sea Angling Festival and the presentations were formal affairs at the city's Continental Hotel. In the picture are Ken and Betty Ellis, BCC Officials, and the President, Hetty Eathorne, is presenting the award

◀ Ernie Passmore co-skipper of Our Unity deals with a big conger at a wreck in Lyme Bay. It was lead picture in an article entitled Auf Wilde Conger commissioned by the German Angling Magazine Blinker. Germany has many conger enthusiasts who frequently fished in UK waters ▶

and many clubs have now left the scene.

Another very competitive event has been for the Solitaire Cup awarded for the biggest fish in the year taken completely unaided. Great feats of co-ordination have been displayed, none more so than by Alan Tibbs who has won twice with eels of 107lb and 101lb, both caught from his own boat Waypoint 1 off Dungeness and Dymchurch in Kent.

A two-man team inter-port competition in which only one nominated date to fish is allowed, the only exception being bad weather, has been well supported. During its 60 years the club has assisted in the claiming of 10 British Records. The one it missed out on was the first 100lb fish taken at the wreck of the Flying Enterprise, an American freighter at the centre of a sea drama over the Christmas of 1951 that began 400 miles off Ireland. Great efforts were made to tow her to safety but she sank 42 miles south-east of Falmouth. When the wreck was discovered amazing catches of ling, conger, pollack and cod were made. The undisclosed conger weighed 102lb 8oz and was hustled to London where apparently it was hidden away until pictures appeared exclusively in a weekly angling newspaper. The fish's captor, Rob Thompson, was a member of London's Britannia SAC on a 36-hour trip aboard the Mevagissey boat Karen Jane and on that day a staggering 4,528lb of fish was registered. So great was competition for food on the wreck the record conger took a pirk!

HALL OF FAME

In 1995 Brixham's Vic Evans caught his record conger of 133lb 4oz at a wreck no more than 11 miles from Brixham Harbour. On the day he caught the eel had two lads on board who had booked via Vic's kiosk on Brixham quay. Both were relatively inexperienced so he had to take the responsibility of gaffing the huge fish with only minimum and nervous assistance. The capture of the giant eel was the fulfilment of Vic's long held ambition. He firmly believed that an eel he hooked and played for 30 minutes three years before was much bigger than his record fish and possibly closing on 170lb. He

Vic Evans with the British record conger of 133lb 4oz caught in June 1995

Graham Eden's 92lb 13oz reef conger

lost count of the number of line stripping dives it made and it was only a matter of 30 feet to the surface when it was lost. His record fish was set up, the cost being met by Brixham SAC, and was unveiled at its headquarters by the Mayor of Torbay. Two years later the International Game Fish Association, which was in the process of fitting out the Hall of Fame at its brand-new Headquarters at Dania Beach in Florida, asked the Conger Club if it would provide a replica for the display of record fish. The club agreed and the huge protective case containing the eel was flown to America. The replica was hung from the ceiling with other displays above a brass floor plaque giving all the details. Thoughtfully on two occasions the club seated me at the table under the conger at presentation dinners.

Over the years the Conger Club has become very conservation minded and encourages catch and release. It begs the question: What if a member caught what was obviously a contender for Evans' record? Will he return the fish or, as the British Rod Caught Fish Committee demands, bring it to land for weighing on accredited scales? The skipper of the boat involved may also have a view as such a fish would attract huge and valuable publicity. ■

In the 1960s and 1970s the boat every conger enthusiast wanted to be on was Our Unity out of Brixham. To have the sticker on your tackle box was a trophy in itself!

CLUB RECORDS

The only member to record a 50lb-plus eel from the shore (56lb 4oz) and 100lb from boat (109lb 6oz) is Roger Beer of Ivybridge.

The UK records since the formation of the club:

Colin Chapman, 85lb 9oz, Lyme Bay
Peter Arscott, 92lb, 13oz, Lyme Bay
Billy Oaten, 95lb 11oz, Lyme Bay
Ron Thompson, 102lb 8oz, Falmouth
Robin Potter, 109lb 6oz, Plymouth
Hans Clausen 110lb 5oz, Plymouth
Trevor Kerrison, 111lb 4oz, Plymouth
Nial Ball 112lb 8oz, Dartmouth
Del Mash112lb 8oz, Plymouth
Vic Evans 133lb 4oz, Brixham

For more information on the British Conger Club and details on how to join visit www.britishcongerclub.org.uk

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Words & Pictures DAVE LEWIS

ABERYSTWYTH

With tope and black bream inshore and plenty of accessible wrecks offshore, Aberystwyth is a great location to explore this summer

Black bream from the reefs around Aberystwyth

Cardigan Bay has long been associated with excellent sea angling, and Aberystwyth is perfectly located right in the middle of this west facing stretch of coastline. Popular with tourists, Aberystwyth has long been a favourite port for boat anglers, especially those from the Midlands. Once the home port for a dozen or more busy charter boats. Today, sadly, you will not find a single charter boat based here. Thankfully, anglers who want to fish the productive fishing grounds can do so aboard their own boats, which they can either berth or launch at Aberystwyth Marina.

SPECIES

Popular species caught off Aberystwyth throughout the spring and summer months include tope and black bream, both of which are often available in large numbers. The first tope start to appear in April. These often include some of the biggest fish of the season and include specimens in excess of 50lb, 60lb, or even 70lb. As the summer progresses the number of tope caught increases, though the average size drops to between 15lb-40lb – typical pack fish that on light tackle provide great sport in the shallow water where they are often found.

Bream are numerous on the shallow inshore reefs all summer, along with bass which are another species that can be caught in large numbers, especially on lures. Other species caught here include plenty of bull huss, dogfish, gurnards and thornback rays, though sadly the latter are not seen in the huge numbers they once were. Most days boats catch both greater and lesser weaver fish, usually on feathers while catching mackerel for fresh bait. Take care when handling these venomous fish, especially if inexperienced or junior anglers are aboard.

WRECKS

Cardigan Bay has numerous wrecks, though most of the most productive ones are located a long way offshore. Pollack are the main species caught from these along with cod, coalfish and ling, and even an occasional porbeagle shark. Autumn and winter produce mostly whiting and a few codling, though in all honesty there is very little angling activity offshore beyond the end of October. Cardigan

Bay is one of the last areas in the country where true monkfish are caught, that is 'angel sharks' not the fishmonger's 'monkfish' which is actually the angler fish. Please note these are a highly endangered and protected species, that shouldn't be targeted and if caught accidently must be returned immediately.

MARKS & TACTICS

Mostly boats fish here at anchor though depending on target species occasionally boats fish on the drift, mostly when looking to catch fresh mackerel for bait, lure fishing for bass or when fishing a wreck. Much of Cardigan Bay is relatively flat and featureless, with the seabed consisting of a mix of sand, mud and shingle. But there are several prominent reefs located within close proximity to Aberystwyth and it is in the vicinity of these that most boat anglers fish. It is here that you'll invariably find the best of the fishing.

One of the most productive fishing grounds is Sarn Cynfelin or The Patches reef, the location of which is conveniently marked by The Patches buoy seven miles offshore. Head north from Aberystwyth, and just off the town of Tywyn you'll find Sarn Bwch reef. In addition to being prolific for bream and tope, this reef is noted for lure fishing for bass. Cadwgan Reef is situated to the south of the Patches just to the north of Llanrstydd, and it is yet another productive mark for various species. Cardigan Bay is sheltered from winds with easterly aspects, but open and exposed to winds from the southwest to northwest.

You can berth a boat at the marina or launch from the slip

LAUNCHING

Boats can be launched for approximately two to three hours either side of high water from an excellent and well-sheltered slipway that you'll find within the inner reaches of Aberystwyth Harbour. The cost is £18 which covers both launching and parking, plus the use of fresh water, toilets, and showers within marina. An annual pass allowing unlimited use of this facility costs £130. Visitors berths within the marina are charged at a rate of £19.50 per metre, per week. Diesel is available at the marina and petrol can be obtained from several petrol stations nearby. ■

NEED TO KNOW

For more information contact the harbour master on Tel: 01970 611422
E: enquiries@aberatthemarinegroup.co.uk
Port call sign & working channel: VHF Channel 80
Website: themarinegroup.co.uk/marinas/aberystwyth/
Milford Haven Coastguard: Tel 01646 690909

FISHING TACKLE SHOPS:

■ Aber Fishing Tackle is located a short distance from the marina at 3 Terrace Road Tel 0970 611200. They sell all locally required tackle along with fresh bait such as ragworm, plus top-quality Ammo frozen baits. They open 0900-1730 every day during the summer but shut on Sundays during the winter.

■ GB Fishing are located at 5 Corporation Street, and can be contacted on Tel: 01970 630974

You'll find plenty of accommodation locally to suit all budgets.

Words & Pictures DAVE LEWIS

A Kilmore coalie

FACT FILE

■ Kilmore Quay is located a short drive west from the Rosslare ferry terminal.

■ For launching, berthing and other information about Kilmore Quay Marina visit: kilmorequaymarina.com

Charter boats based at Kilmore Quay include:

■ Autumn Dream: Contact Eamonn Hayes +353 87 2135308 or +353 53 9129723
Email info@kilmoreangling.com
Website: kilmoreangling.com

■ Lady Alison: Contact: Paul Bates
Mobile Phone: +353 86 2075901 or Phone: +353 53 9129831
Email: bates.p@hotmail.com

■ An Foracha and An Crosan: Contact: Declan Bates Mobile Phone: +353 87 529736 Phone: +353 53 9129684
Email: declanbates@eircom.net

■ Enterprise: Contact: Dick Hayes
Mobile Phone: +353 87 2549111 Phone: +353 53 9129704

■ Celtic Lady: Contact: John Devereux:
Mobile Phone: +353 87 2926469 Phone: +353 53 9129637

■ Kilmore Quay Angling: Contact: Walter Rankin Mobile Phone: +353 85 1730323
Email: rankinw1@hotmail.comWebsite: kilmorequayangling.com

■ For more information on fishing in Ireland visit: fishinginireland.info

■ You'll find a wide range of accommodation in the area. I have stayed at and recommend: www.hotelsaltees.ie

Typical rough ground pollack

Expect codling on lures too

KILMORE QUAY

Home of the famous Rosslare Small Boats Festival, Kilmore Quay offers some craicing inshore and offshore Irish sport

Kilmore Quay is a busy fishing harbour located in County Wexford in the south-east corner of Ireland. Kilmore has long been a popular port for boat anglers, both those who fish aboard charter boats and those who trailer and launch their own boats. It's the location for the long running Rosslare Small Boats Festival, a hugely popular species hunt that attracts many of the UK's very best small boat anglers. The species fishing around Kilmore Quay is some of the best in the whole of Ireland, and it's not uncommon for over 40 species to be landed during this week-long competition.

MARKS

You only need to look at chart covering the area to see just why the boat fishing here is so varied and productive. Just over three miles offshore you'll find The Saltee Islands; the waters around these islands are surrounded by a myriad of reefs. Take note though, as the seabed off the south-east corner of Ireland is littered with numerous drying reefs, partially submerged rocks, and dangerous shoals, which in addition to providing perfect holding and feeding ground for fish, also pose an obvious and very serious hazard to navigation and safety. I've fished off the Saltee Islands on numerous occasions, and we have almost always fished on the drift, using various types of lures and relatively light tackle.

Productive areas to fish are located around The Short Bohur, The Bore, The Brandies, Red Bank, Coningmore Rocks, and the swift flowing sound between Little and Great Saltee islands. Take extra care in the vicinity of Red Bank and in between the Saltee Islands as powerful tide rips can make the seas here very unpredictable, notably during spring tides.

TACTICS & SPECIES

Lures worked over rough ground off the Irish coast invariably mean pollack, and apart from mackerel, pollack are the most frequently caught species. In this corner of Ireland pollack average 2lb-6lb, occasionally a little bigger, but all provide tremendous sport if caught on light spinning rods. Other species to expect when lure fishing over rough ground include coalfish, bass, mackerel, launce, gurnards, codling and several species of wrasse. Fishing over open ground expect to catch various species of ray and flatfish, dogfish, huss, smoothounds and more. The tope fishing off Kilmore Quay can be excellent. Fresh bait, especially live ragworm, is hugely effective for coalfish, cod, ling, bass, wrasse and numerous other species. Live mackerel is deadly for better quality bass and, of course, tope.

WRECKING

Lying on the seabed out in the deep water off the coast of south-east Ireland and the Celtic Sea, there are plenty of wrecks. Many of these hold concentrations of fish that will provide sport of a standard many anglers have never experienced. Once again, you'll catch mostly pollack, but often these rusting hulks hold decent numbers of sizeable coalfish, ling, conger and cod. Throughout the summer months drifting for shark offshore is yet another option. You'll mostly catch blues averaging 30lb-80lb but much bigger fish are often caught, including an occasional porbeagle. In the last few years thresher and mako shark have been taken off the coast of southern Ireland too.

As good as the fishing is off the Irish coast, most angler's thoughts and conversation invariably start to drift towards the legendary Irish hospitality that awaits the thirsty fisherman on land. A few pints of Guinness consumed during your stay in the Emerald Isle are almost obligatory! ■

Words and photography by SEA ANGLER

UK bluefin tuna fishing gets the go-ahead again in 2022 as part of the CHART scientific catch and release programme

GREEN LIGHT

Anglers will once again be allowed to target bluefin tuna in 2022 as the CHART catch and release scientific programme was approved by the government for another year. The programme allows anglers fishing on charter boats registered as part of the programme to fish for bluefin tuna around the UK. Last year an incredible 700 tuna were caught and tagged by skippers who perfected how to catch bluefin using spreader bars after the use of live bait was ruled out of what is technically a scientific research programme on animal welfare grounds; Dead baits simply don't work consistently enough to be used.

The number of charter boats allowed to take part in the 2022 programme is likely to increase slightly and it is hoped that up to 30 boats may qualify to take part in the fishery which begins in the late summer and runs through the autumn, although the fish are present well into the New Year in the South West of England.

The ultimate objective is to get a catch and release recreational angling fishery for bluefin tuna here in the UK which allows anglers to target bluefin tuna but not just as part of a tightly controlled scientific research programme. This will be likely to involve training, permits or licences, and a set of requirements to ensure the fish are released safely and in good health. The government has also announced a consultation on the development of a such a fishery and anglers, clubs, and anyone else interested will be encouraged to give their views on this when the consultation is launched.

Steve Murphy has become 'Mr Bluefin' as he has spearheaded the programme working with skippers, scientists, civil servants and angling groups to bring the CHART programme to fruition and it's thanks to a phenomenal amount of work, and determination, from him that anglers are able to legally enjoy fishing for bluefin tuna (albeit in a tightly monitored and controlled way).

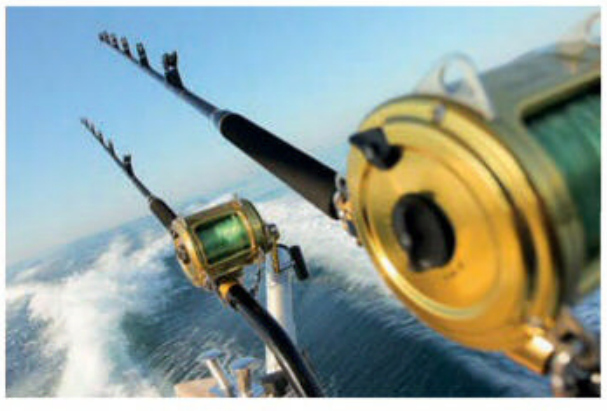
'Last year's CHART programme exceeded all expectations with record numbers of fish caught, tagged, and safely released. Studies indicate that the financial benefit to the coastal communities in the South West ran to several hundred thousand pounds providing an extended recreational fishing season and a welcome boost for local economies.

Whilst it is great that CHART will operate again this year, we are keen to expand the number of participating boats and want to see our vision of a licensed live release, bluefin tuna fishery realised as soon as possible. The

FOR BLUEFINS

forthcoming consultation and "scoping project" will be an important step on this road.'

Sea Angler will be bringing readers news of the CHART programme for 2022 in the coming months including how they can get involved in catching these big game fish from UK waters. ■



BLUEFIN TUNA AND THE LAW

Bluefin tuna stocks are managed internationally as part of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). It is illegal for recreational anglers in the UK to target bluefin tuna other than as part of the CHART programme while fishing from registered vessels. Any fish caught accidentally must be returned to the sea immediately. For more information visit the Bluefin Tuna UK Facebook page.

Words and photography by DAVE LEWIS

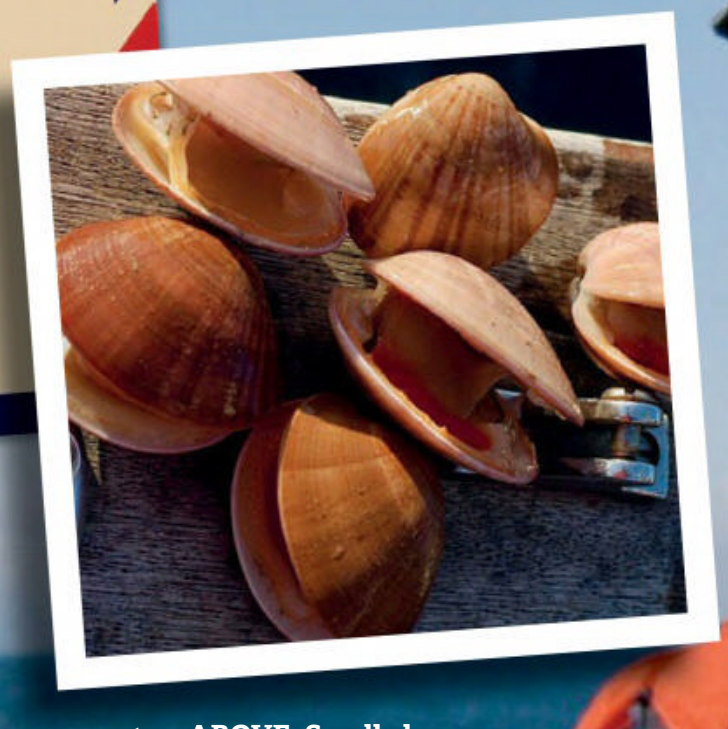
The world's greatest fishing

Species and venues for your angling bucket list

AIR MAIL

PANDORA BREAM

If you are lucky, and keep your ear to the ground for catch reports, this tasty warm water species is a target possibility from the southwestern most parts of the UK



Pandora bream, Pagellus erythrinus, have a slim, oval body, with a small mouth featuring somewhat bulbous lips. They are generally pinkish in colour, with their back peppered with lilac blue spots. A rare summer and autumn visitor to the UK, the current British record is held with a fish that weighed 3lb 6oz, caught in 1997 off Newquay, Cornwall. Pandora bream are found primarily along the eastern shores of the Atlantic Ocean, but specimens have been record from Scandinavia to Cape Verde, including the Mediterranean and the North Sea. The species is common throughout much the of the Mediterranean, which is where I have encountered them at several destinations, notably Gibraltar.

Anyone looking to catch a Pandora bream here in the UK should make every effort to liaise closely with charter skippers and other anglers who have had previous success with the species and, of course, monitor social media for reports of fish caught. You need to establish not only exactly where to fish, but when. The vast majority of Pandora reported in the UK have been caught by anglers fishing reefs off the coast of Devon, Cornwall and the Channel Islands.

ABOVE: Small clams are an excellent bait for Pandora bream

BAIT

From my experience just about any bait will be effective for the various species of bream. Favourites include long thin strips of squid or mackerel, various types of marine worms and chunks of peeler crab. Shellfish are an excellent bait for bream, especially mussels and razorfish. All of the Pandoras I have caught have taken some kind of shellfish, notably the small clams which are widely available and used throughout the Mediterranean. Here in the UK, I suspect that the scraps left over from freshly shucked scallops would make a very effective bait for Pandoras, and any of the other species of bream you'll likely encounter over the same ground.

Ground baiting with scraps of bait will always improve your results when targeting bream, not only helping to induce fish to feed, but also pulling them into exactly the area you are fishing. The tide will always carry the ground bait astern of the boat, which, not surprisingly, is where most feeding bream will tend to congregate. For this reason one of the best techniques you can use to catch bream is to use the minimum amount of weight that will allow you to maintain bottom contact, then allow the run of tide to slowly trot your baited terminal rig back until you locate feeding fish. For bream I use a simple two or three hook paternoster rig, with 10-15in hook snoods terminating in long shank Aberdeen hooks which offer the best bait presentation. The excellent stainless-steel Sakuma 410s are perfect.

There is a definite knack to hooking bream. At times they will eagerly take just about any bait you drop down to the bottom and are more or less impossible to miss. While at other times they can prove frustratingly difficult to hook. When this is the case, and you are experiencing hard rod rattling bites yet are consistently failing to hook the fish, try gently easing the bait away from the fish by very slowly lifting the rod, as soon as you detect the first bite. Often this will prove too much to the interested fish which will throw caution aside and engulf your bait. Pandora bream are one of the finest tasting fish I have eaten, especially when grilled over hot coals! ■

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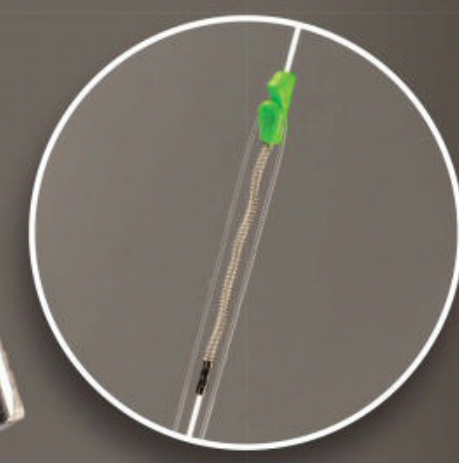

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Words and photography by DAVE LEWIS

SECRETS TO SMALL EYED RAY

Head west, get afloat, and bag a hard-fighting small eyed ray with Dave Lewis' expert tips on boating one of these elegant elasmobranchs

Small eyed ray (Raja microocellata) are one of the most distinct ray species found in the UK and, in my opinion, with the exception of stingray, pound for pound, they are the hardest fighting species. This is certainly the case when hooked in shallow water, which will often be the case.

Distributed almost exclusively in the south and west of the UK, typically west of the Isle of Wight, small eyed ray are caught at localised marks throughout Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. The Bristol Channel has long been a stronghold for this species, which can also be found throughout the southern half of Cardigan Bay. Small-eyed-ray occupy a similar south-westerly distribution in Ireland, where they are most commonly caught in County Kerry at locations including Brandon and Tralee Bay where they are commonly referred to as 'painted ray.' That said, in recent years, this species of ray seems to be extending its range of distribution in areas such as the Bristol Channel.

Small eyed ray are usually found over sand, and especially sand banks. Many small eyed ray are encountered in shallow or very shallow water. I have caught them fishing in just a couple of feet of water as a flooding tide covers a sandbank that has previously dried out over low water, such as the prolific Nash and Scarweather sand banks off the coast of South Wales. Many of the very best areas are also subjected to a strong run of tide. In some areas, such as the south-west of Ireland, small eyed ray can be caught throughout the year, but in mainland UK

Small eyed ray favour shallow water

Powerful jaws will damage monofilament hooklengths

Uptiding in shallow water is a great tactic

most are caught from spring through until the autumn. The current British boat caught record for small eyed ray stands at 17lb, 18oz 07dm, with a fish caught in 1991 off Watchet in the Bristol Channel.

TACKLE

An uptide outfit is ideal in most areas where small eyes are caught. Being able to cast a baited rig well away from the boat ensures that it will be fishing outside of the scare area created by a boat anchored in very shallow water. Casting baits away from an anchored boat also helps to locate any isolated pockets of fish which might be concentrated in gullies or around other seabed features. If fishing at anchor a very effective technique for small-eyed ray is to cast your baited rig away from the boat, then allow the tide to slowly drag the bait across the bottom. Use a plain flat-sided lead with just enough weight to hug the bottom yet allow the run of tide to drag the bait as slowly as possible

RIGS & BAIT

A running ledger is the perfect rig for both uptide and downtide fishing for small eyes. A boom, or even a simple link swivel slid on the main line or leader, followed by a bead that acts as a buffer, and then a swivel. Attach the hook length to the other side of the swivel. Like most species of ray small eyed do not have teeth, but instead have incredibly strong jaws which will make short work of thin monofilament. Hook lengths should therefore be cut from 50-80lb monofilament.

Depending on the type and size of bait the hook length should terminate in either a single hook or a twin hook Pennell rig. Very sharp and strong hooks such as Sakuma 545 Manta Extras size 3/0-4/0 are perfect. Sandeel is without question the number one choice of bait for small-eyed-ray. Long thin strips of mackerel or squid can also be effective, as can various types of shellfish.

TACTICS

It is standard practice when fishing for ray to give bites plenty of time to develop before attempting to set the hook. The first indications of a bite on the rod tip are usually a result of the ray shuffling around on top of the bait while trying to manoeuvre it into its mouth. Waiting a few minutes until either the rod tip slowly bends over or, if uptiding, the line goes slack when the grip lead breaks out, will usually result in a hooked fish. ■

Dave favours Sakuma 545 Manta Extras

Note the small eyes of the small eyed ray!

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JAMES MADSEN

Bristol Channel angler James Madsen is here to solve all your shore angling problems.

DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.

JOHN HOLDEN

A Sea Angler contrbutor for over four decades specialising in casting and rod building.

HENRY GILBEY

Angler, blogger and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, is our lure expert.

BEN BASSETT

The Plymouth angler and blogger will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK A US QUESTION

■ **Email:** sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

or online: www.facebook.com/seaanglermag

By asking a question you are giving us permission to use your name and where you live in all versions and platforms of this magazine.

Q Could you please tell me what the apparent measurement rating in thousands, i.e. 7000 to 14000 on similar-looking sea fixed spool reels, actually refers to?

NEIL MAYELL, DOVER, KENT

WINNING QUESTION

JM says: The numeric measuring found on fixed spool reels is an indication of size. Most fixed spool reels will go up in thousands, but you will also find some models which go up in hundred increments as well. Generally, fixed spool reels that are purposely meant for sea fishing start from around the 4000 bracket and this is mainly down to the size of the spool. With closer inspection you will notice a greater line capacity on the spool as you move up in size bracket with each model of reel. You may also notice certain components, like the drag system on the reel for example, which have been made more powerful in the larger models. To summarise, as that number found on fixed spool reels increases, so does the size of the reel and spool, which offers a greater line capacity and often more powerful components in the make-up of the reel.

Q My mates all use pulley beads but I'm still using a swivel on my pulley rigs. Please can you tell me the advantages of using pulley beads? WILLIAM GOODWIN, BIRMINGHAM

JM says: A pulley bead will spread the load from your casting weight which creates the tension on the body of your pulley rig. You have probably noticed when using a single attachment swivel on a pulley rig it will mark and crease the line in one place on your rig body. This can seriously weaken that particular point of the rig body and sometimes a single swivel can even cut through your rig when you cast. Because of this, and for safety reasons, most anglers tying up pulley rigs with a single attachment swivel will use quite a heavy monofilament. Use of a pulley bead means you could get away with a lighter rig body, plus you can also do away with the additional beads that would ordinarily be there to trap either side of a single running swivel on a pulley rig.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Rapala Sufix

Q I catch plenty of dabs but the majority take the hook well into the throat where I cannot reach it so I have to kill them. Other sea anglers I have talked to just seem to cut the line as close to the hook as they can get it and release the fish. Am I doing something wrong or is there a way to bait the hook, or perhaps use a different hook, to reduce the number of fish where this happens? FRANK THRESHER, DARLINGTON

JM says: The best answer to reduce catching deeply hooked fish would be to look into changing your hook pattern. I would recommend trying circle hooks because they have been designed to be more fish friendly and reduce deeper hook-ups. You will see that the point on a circle hook is 90 degrees to the shank and this means it's much less likely to penetrate the more delicate parts of a fish, preventing the more life-threatening hook-ups around the gills or the gut. If rigged up correctly, a circle hook should just catch in the raised edges around the corner of a fish's mouth. Circle hooks can take a bit of getting used to. I like to attach mine onto the snoods with a perfection loop because this allows the hook to move more freely. Free movement will allow the point of the circle hook to catch in the corner edge of a fish's mouth more easily. The way you bait up a circle hook is another important factor. This time it's the free movement of the bait which should not be fixed in one place or elasticated directly to the hook. I have found that once the hook point has penetrated you will want the bait to move up the shank towards the eye of the circle hook. The bait moving up towards the eye will allow the entire circle to enter the fish's mouth and give you the best possible hold. Letting your bites develop is another equally important factor when fishing with a circle hook. There is no need to strike and set the hook, just simply lift up your rod and wind in. If we want to practice better catch and release when fishing in the sea, then in my opinion, circle hooks are definitely a good way forward. One more thing worth noting is that regardless of which hook pattern we select, my thoughts are that if we find a fish bleeding from the gills then the realistic chances of its long-term survival are pretty low. Sometimes putting a fish out of its misery quickly is the kindest thing to do. By using circle hooks we can help prevent that from happening in the first place.

Q I've often wondered what brings the larger more predatory species like bass, rays, smoothhounds, and sometimes even tope, onto flat, shallow, and pretty much featureless sandy beaches around the UK?

COLIN TRACEY, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

JM says: Fish are born to swim, feed and reproduce. I would say the larger, more predatory, fish we catch on flat sandy beaches are definitely there to feed. What these fish are feeding on will vary depending on the area of coastline, the time of year and, of course, which species of fish we are talking about. Most fish are opportunistic and could be caught on a variety of different baits, but the chances are when they are feeding in a specific location, then they will be hunting for a specific prey. When we are talking about fish feeding over a flat, sandy, beach I think shrimp and prawn could be a massive influencing factor. Believe it or not, some long, flat, and seemingly featureless sandy beaches can host a really wide selection of different crustaceans, including different species of crab. Smoothhounds, bass, and rays all love eating crustaceans. Another thing to look out for is the smaller bait fish. Sandeels and launce are both commonplace on sandy beaches and they are of course a firm favourite of bass.

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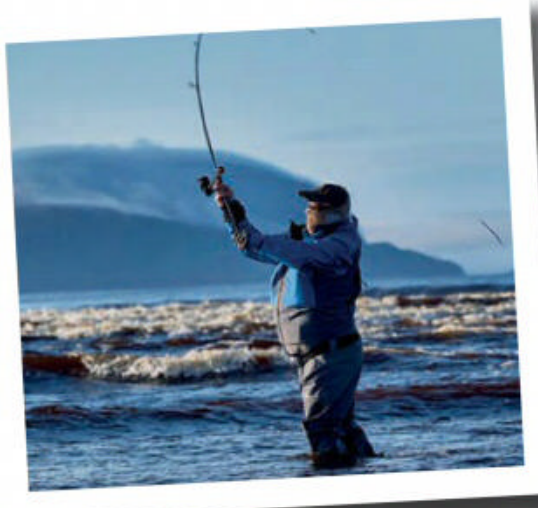
Q&A

LURE FISHING

Q I am using a Mike Ladle Sure Spin MK2 for most of my lure work and it is, for me, a great rod. I have just turned 50 and want something similar; as in easy to pack but a little lighter. I would like something to throw lighter soft plastics and similar with ease but still have the length, around 10ft. I have a budget of £200-£250. What would you recommend please?

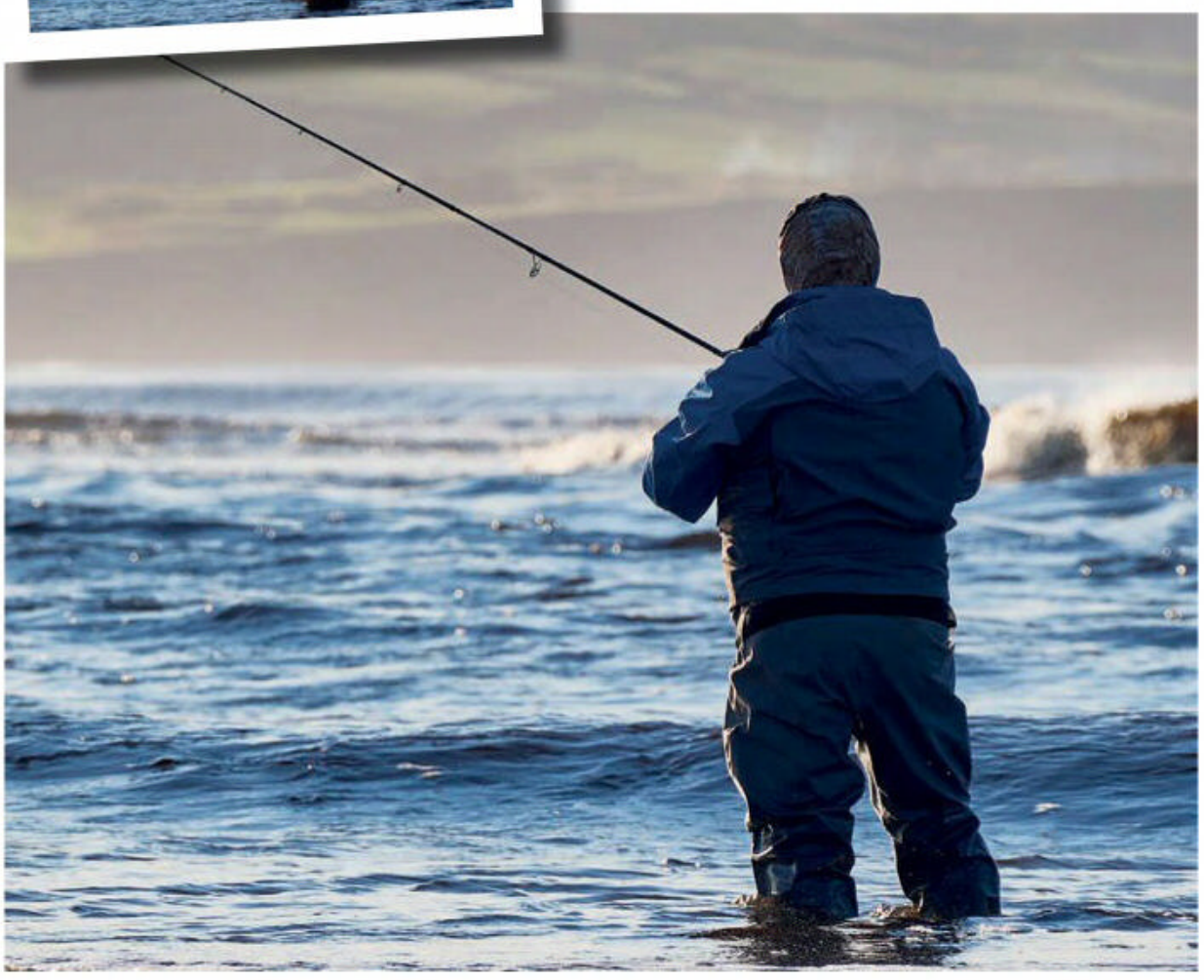
MARK STEWART, DORSET



HG says: With the greatest respect to awesome bass anglers like Mike Ladle, rod technology has moved on a hell of a lot since those popular Sure Spin MK2 lure rods. I would love to be able to meet up with you and put some of the newer, lighter, and far more responsive fishing rods in your hands and watch you as you get to grips with them. I honestly don't think you will believe the difference.

I am not saying that the rod you are currently fishing with is a bad rod, rather that technology has moved on and you have asked for some advice on a more suitable rod for soft plastics. First off, I am going to ask you to forget about a 10ft lure rod and come down to 9ft 6in. You do not need a 10ft rod for most of our bass fishing, and while there is always going to be an argument that a 10ft rod might be useful in the surf, in the UK and Ireland I can do all of what I need to do with 9ft 6in rod and under. Give it a while with a modern 9ft 6in lure rod and see how easily it sits in your hands. I genuinely don't think you will believe it. The older rods, which were largely based on floppier-style salmon spinning blanks, are a world apart from what we are using these days. A modern lure rod these days can be incredibly light and crisp and so precise to fish with. I would bet that if we talked again in six months you will only be picking up your heavier Sure Spin to remind yourself how much things have changed!

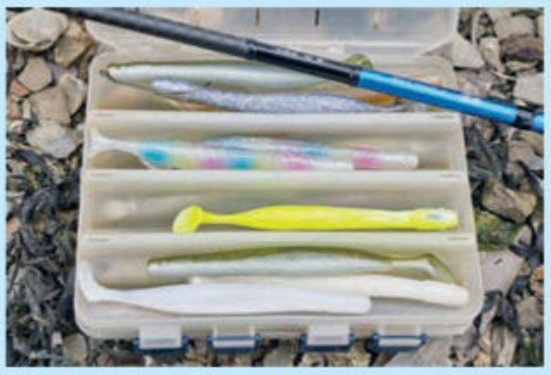
I am going to try and save you some money by suggesting a 9ft 6in rod which costs around £150. You will have to accept a degree of bias because I helped make the rod, but try and have a look at the Savage Gear SGS5 9ft 6in 9-35g lure rod. I shouldn't be saying this, but it's almost too good for the money. I like this rod that much that for some of my 9ft 6in 35g lure fishing I will take this cheaper SGS5 over its much more expensive SGS8 equivalent. I cannot get enough of it for everything from soft plastics through to whacking out the 35g Surf Seeker into lively surf.



WINNING QUESTION

Q Can soft plastics be used as surface and sub-surface lures for our UK bass?

LUKE YOUNG, PEMBROKESHIRE



HG says: Soft plastics are a big, and ever-growing, part of my sub-surface bass fishing in the UK and Ireland. I fish them as sub-surface lures in a variety of different ways, from a few inches under the surface to hard on the bottom in whatever depth of water I am fishing.

There are some very specialist topwater soft plastics which I believe come mainly from the US freshwater bass scene, but I haven't seen them catch on at all here in the UK. What I do find interesting though is how you can take some paddletails rigged weedless and weightless - and fish them as surface lures.

When I developed the Gravity Stick range of soft plastics with Savage Gear, it wasn't that long after they hit the market that a few Spanish anglers contacted me to say that they were fishing the Gravity Stick Paddletail as a surface lure for freshwater bass, and it was working really well. I had never even thought of this! I haven't tried it on our own bass yet, but I played around with the Paddletail fished like this, and it looks pretty impressive when you hold your rod tip up and force it to almost 'pop' a bit on the surface. Is it going to work for our bass? I'm going to give it a good go to find out. I know that much!

Q What are the largest or heaviest lures you use for bass fishing from the shore?

CHRIS WILLIAMS, PORTSMOUTH

HG says: Some years ago a few far more experienced bass anglers than me spent some time banging home to me their theory that bigger lures mean bigger bass – but I simply don't agree. I am not saying that big lures can't catch big bass, but if I went through my massive fishing photo library and pulled out all the grip and grins of anglers with an 8lb plus shore-caught bass, I don't reckon any of those fish came on a lure longer than 140mm. In fact, the biggest bass I have ever photographed was caught on a 125mm hard lure.

I don't carry particularly big or heavy bass lures with me. If I am in the surf and I can't deal with the sea conditions with a 40g Surf Seeker then the conditions are out of control in my book. For all my playing around with soft plastics, you won't find one longer than 140mm with me when I go fishing. Not only do I not feel that big bass show a marked preference for big lures, if I start fishing with much heavier lures then I need to change over to a more powerful lure rod, which in turn means I haven't got the same feel or casting ability when I turn back to smaller or lighter lures in the same session.

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Q&A

BOAT ANGLING

Q What is the difference between a launce and a sandeel? Also, which makes the most effective bait, a fresh or a frozen launce?

JACK EVANS, SWANSEA

DL says: There are several species of sandeel, and launce are one of the larger species. From an angling perspective the different species are simply large and small sandeels and equally effective as bait, with the size chosen being dependent on the day's target species and techniques. Provided you obtain good quality frozen eels, as illustrated, they make a first-class bait. From my experience, frozen sandeels can actually be more effective than fresh when targeting species such as rays, huss, various species of flatfish, and even bass.

Q What is the difference between a popper and a stickbait?

GERRY WHITTLE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

DL says: As the name suggests, a popper is designed to 'pop' across the surface, creating a loud and very visual disturbance that attracts predatory species of fish. The popping action is achieved by the front of the lure having a deep, concave, cup. Stickbaits generally have a cone or convex-shaped head. These are designed to swim either at, or very near, the surface, or slightly deeper within the water column.

WINNING QUESTION

Q Now that braid is becoming so popular with boat anglers, can it be used with older rods which have roller guides or a mixture of rollers and stainless-steel guides?

PAUL SHAPLEY, PENARTH, GLAMORGAN

DL says: Unless the roller guides have been designed specifically for use with braid, which is highly unlikely on older rods, avoid using braid. Modern braided lines are incredibly thin and they have a tendency to get trapped between the actual roller and the frame of the guide, obviously damaging the braid. Normal ceramic lined rings are all you need when intending to use braid.

Q I often read that whenever launching a boat the trailer wheel hubs should not be immersed in water, yet on the beaches where I launch this is virtually impossible. What is your opinion?

NICK PISKA, KENT

DL says: In an ideal world the trailer hubs and bearings contained within should not be dunked in sea water. However, in the real world, such as when beach launching, this is unavoidable. When this is the case thoroughly wash the entire trailer with fresh water as soon as possible after use. Regularly remove each wheel and strip the hubs to check the condition of the bearings, then either re-grease or replace these as necessary. Waterproof hubs are available. I have never used these and have heard various reports as to their effectiveness. There is nothing worse, or dangerous, than a seized hub resulting in a lost wheel when towing, and from my experience regularly stripping the hubs is the only reliable way to prevent this.

Q When drifting for sharks, how often should the bag of rubby dubby be changed?

STEVE HUTCHINS, DERBYSHIRE

DL says: When shark fishing your success or otherwise will often be entirely dependent on the effectiveness of your rubby dubby trail. Start off with a bag, or two, then either top up these with fresh rubby dubby after two or three hours or add additional bags. Regularly shaking the bags throughout the day will greatly assist the flow of scent, and therefore effectiveness in attracting sharks.

Q I have been told that when fishing for species such as bream and tope, dropping chopped fish down to the bottom can be very effective attracting fish to the vicinity of the boat. How is this achieved?

TERRY PEMBERTON, EAST SUSSEX

DL says: Depending on the depth of water you are fishing there are various techniques which can be used. Most skippers I know have created their own weighted grounding baiting tools, usually using a short section of pipe. This can then be filled with bait and dropped down to the seabed, where they open and spill their contents.

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Q&A

LIGHT ROCK FISHING

Q What is your opinion on ester line?

JOHN CLARKE, MONMOUTHSHIRE

BB says: Polyester line or 'ester' for short, is another interesting import from Japan. It has the look of fluorocarbon or mono but has the direct feel and zero stretch of braid. Most importantly, it is denser than the other lines so it doesn't slow the descent of your lure through the water column. This makes it very useful when using ultralight weights – such as under a gram. The drawback is that the best ester lines only come in very low breaking strains, often no more than 3lb. The one I use, (Majorcraft Dangan Ester) is 1.5lb breaking strain. Although large fish can be landed on such light line, the issue mostly comes from snags and lifting fish from the water. You need to be aware of what you are fishing around and always bring a net! Other than that, ester is a joy to use.

WINNING QUESTION

Q What's your go-to, never-leave-home-without lure?

DARREN MAY, CORNWALL

BB says: That's a tough question as we LRFers are spoilt for choice when it comes to lures. I'm going to cheat and pick one from the three main categories of lures we regularly use. My absolute must-have artificial bait is the Ecogear Aqua Shirasu which is made of the same material as Isome or Gulp but has the excellent ball tail shape that almost every fish will eat. For a soft plastic I always have a pack of 2in Keitech Easy Shiner on me, they are paddletails that are a step above the competition. When it comes to metal jigs, the Majorcraft Jigpara Micro Regular in any size is an essential; High quality hooks, easy casting, and seductive action on the fall – perfect for LRF.

Q Is there really a difference between using 1000 or 2000 spools?

NUNO SA, PORTUGAL

BB says: When it comes to reel sizes, one step up can make a big difference. For LRF, I wouldn't recommend going any larger than 2500. I use a 1000 size for almost all of my LRF fishing, but I like to step it up to a 2000 for working larger metal jigs up to 10g. When it comes to the spools that hold the line, look for shallow spools that will make it easier to load your ultralight line so casting is smooth.

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Q&A
KAYAK FISHING

Q Please could you explain the why, where, and when to the use of scupper bungs; when they could and should be used? I have put the plugs in then taken them out not quite knowing. This would be good for my safety and peace of mind.

STEVE BLATCH. LINCOLNSHIRE

MC says: This is a question I didn't expect to see as I had completely forgotten about the existence of these! They are an excellent add-on purchase for the retailer that provides little to zero benefit to the customer if I'm completely honest with you! I did, of course, fall into the exact same trap when I bought my first sit-on-top and so did most of the guys I used to fish with. That's not to say that they are a complete waste of money but for you and I they certainly are. Scupper plugs or bungs have one purpose and that is to block the drainage holes in the bottom of the cockpit section (or tankwell) of a kayak, the idea being that it stops water coming up into the kayak from below. However, they also stop water flowing out of the kayak from above so it's a definite two-way street and, of course, those scupper holes are there for a reason. The first of these is of course to allow the free flowing of water while the second – and this has a noticeable effect – is to provide strength and rigidity to the mould in key places. A prime example of the difference they make is when comparing the Ocean Kayak Scupper Pro and RTM Tempo kayaks which are mostly the same kayak historically. The drawback of course is that water comes into the seat well. The other place that the scupper holes come in is by my feet. This is the low point of the cockpit area so of course is the best place to have drainage but is also the area that you push against when paddling therefore it's a place, like the seat well, that benefits from extra rigidity. Remove the hole mouldings and you have a kayak that has an increased potential for going floppy.

As you say that you fish the coastlines then you will be padding somewhere where more water is likely to get in than otherwise – waves, spray etc. will all dump water in to the kayak which will have nowhere to go if you have scupper plugs inserted. The worst example of this is of course when launching through some waves when water gets dumped in your lap and you could then of course be trying to paddle out with a good few kgs of water slowing you down and affecting stability as well as potentially washing your kit overboard. This illustrates where they are designed for – flat water, especially freshwater. Worldwide (and certainly in Ocean Kayak's home market of America) most sit on top kayaks are sold for freshwater use by what might be termed as the amateur weekend paddlers rather than the dedicated kayaker. Being denser and less buoyant than saltwater the kayak will sit lower in freshwater so more water incursion will happen. There are unlikely to be waves to contend with either and the only water likely to get into the kayak in normal use would be the drips from a paddle. Essentially, scupper plugs are for flat, freshwater, use.

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Q&A

CASTING

Q You often hear about 'clipped down' rigs, but I often wondered if there could be such a thing as a 'clipped up' rig. If this was possible, would the baits still release the same or would you get more tangles? As the lead always leads in the Cast, would arranging your rigs way make them more streamlined, thereby allowing more distance in the cast?

Bob Price, Norfolk

JH says: Clips do work well enough high on the rig, and that can be useful in some circumstances. Generally, though, it is better to clip the baits fairly close to the sinker. You tend to get better release that way, and then there is the option to use clips integrated with the sinker - Breakaway Impact Leads, for example. The heavier and bulkier the bait, the better it becomes to clip it right behind the sinker. There is less air drag and cleaner casting. If there's too much separation between the sinker and a heavy bait, the rig tends to swirl around in the air rather than fly straight.

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SEA SCHOOL

How to make your own winning rigs

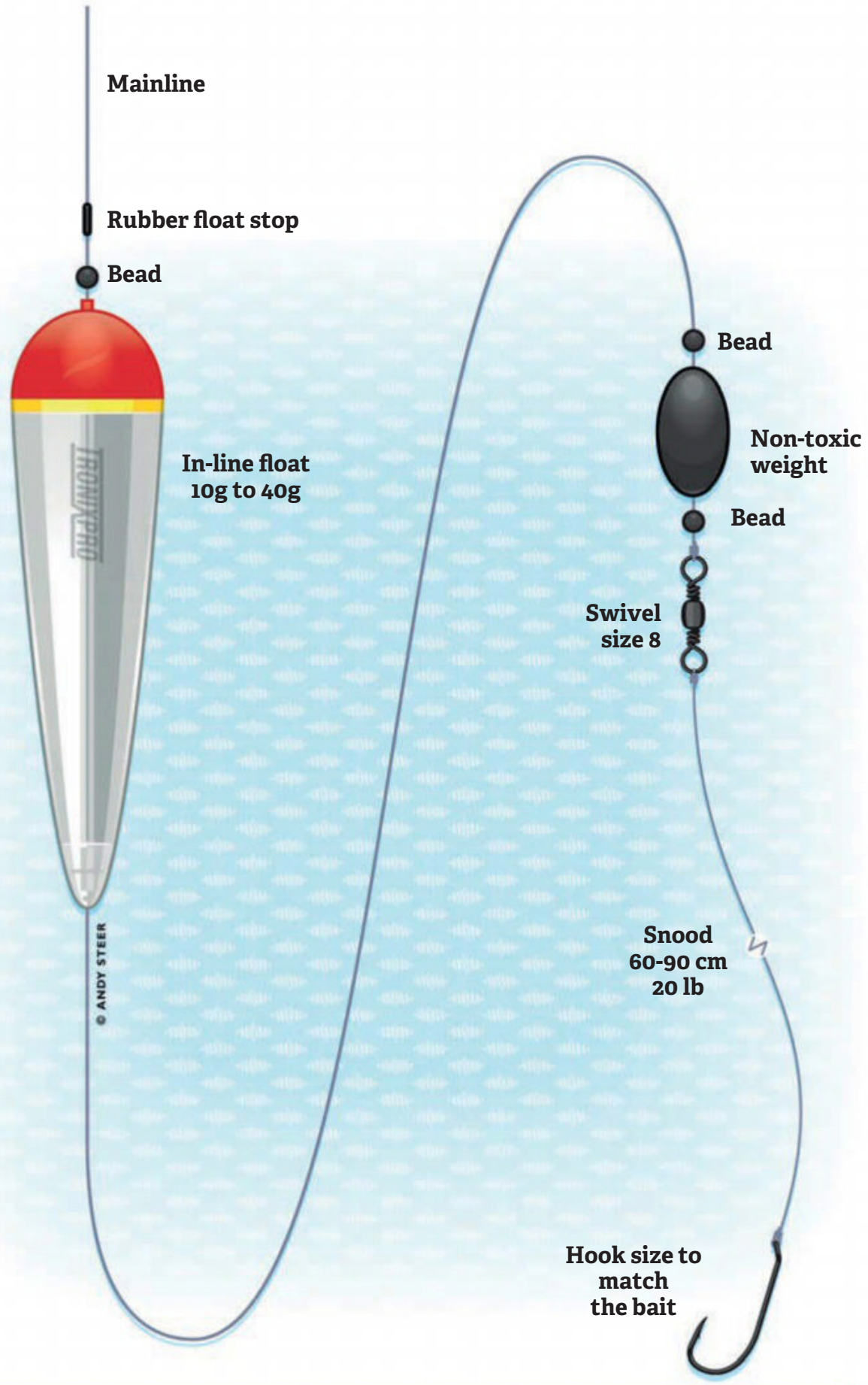
PART 14

Artwork by Andy Steer

SLIDING FLOAT

With summer on its way many sea anglers will be reaching for their float fishing tackle as a super-exciting and effective method of catching a wide variety of species such as wrasse, mackerel, garfish, pollack, mullet and bass.

The sliding float rig allows you to easily adjust the depth at which your bait is presented depending on where the fish are and what depth of water you are fishing in. Follow these instructions on tying a sliding float rig and be prepared to watch that float go under as another fish takes your bait!



Step-by-step

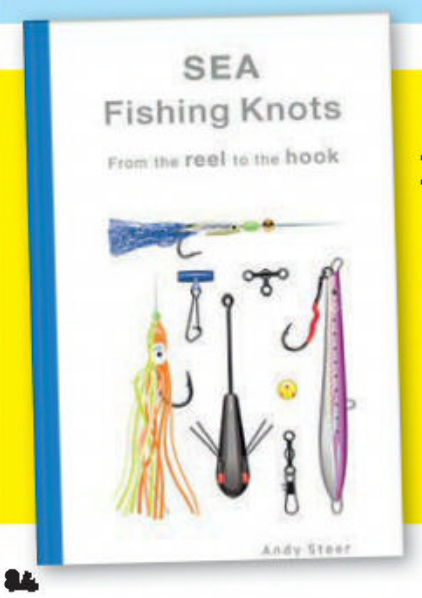
1. Pass your mainline through the loop of wire attached to your rubber float stops. Then pull the float stop off the wire loop until it is connected to your mainline only. The float can then be moved into position.

2. Next, attach a bead to your mainline followed by a 10g-50g in-line float (luminous end first) depending on the species you are fishing for and the conditions you are fishing.

3. Once the float is in place slide on another bead and (ideally) a non-toxic drilled bullet or oval shaped weight. The size of the weight will correspond to the size of the float to ensure it is 'cocked' when fishing.

4. Slide on another bead to the mainline and tie the free end to one eye of a size eight swivel. To the other eye of the swivel tie 60cm-90cm of 20lb snood line (monofilament of fluorocarbon). Finally, to the free end of the snood line tie a hook to match the size of the bait you are using.

5. The float stop can then be moved up or down the mainline to ensure the float is cocked when fishing and the bait is at the required depth in the water column.



SEA FISHING KNOTS - FROM THE REEL TO HOOK

Contains clear, concise, easy to follow step-by-step knot-tying illustrations by Andy Steer of recommended sea fishing/big game fishing knots and set-ups.

This publication should help you to gain a solid base of reliable, tried and tested knots, enabling you to land more fish. It will also help you protect the environment and save money by losing less tackle.

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Words: David Mitchell
and Wesley Shrubsole
Images: Wesley Shrubsole

PREPARING YOUR CATCH

Get the feel for eel – the Sea Angler step-by-step guide to filleting and preparing congers

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Back in the 1970s charter boats out of most southern ports, but especially the South-West, were bringing to shore massive catches of conger eels to over 100lb. This and overfishing by commercial fleets have made the conger eel quite a rare catch in many areas and fishing for them fell out of fashion. However, the species is making a comeback, so much so that congers have replaced cod along much of the south coast with small 'strap' conger becoming a nuisance. This is a 'marmite' species with many people not keen to try and to eat this tasty fish. But prepared properly conger is a very tasty alternative to cod or haddock. The eel has a firm, white, flesh and is suitable for fish pies and, unlike its smaller cousin, is not served in jelly. Once again, the Master Fishmongers from The Boathouse Fisheries will show you how to prepare conger and what the best cuts for cooking are. The eel featured here is about 8lb; the sort of size many beach and pier anglers are catching at the moment.

Once again, the tools of the trade are: a filleting knife with a flexible blade, a stronger blade for cutting through the bone of the eel, scissors to trim the fin from the fish, and pliers and a block with nails on it to get purchase on the fish when skinning it.

The first cuts at the head of the eel are important for the skinning process. The 'v' shape cut allows you to get a purchase to pull the skin away in one section.

This fish is more easy to skin than the dogfish and rays and reveals the pure white meat. At all stages it is important to wash away any blood as this will spoil the flesh.

Gutting the eel is as you would a white fish, just a little larger!

Tidy up the sides of the fillet before cutting into portions.

About 6oz is ideal for one serving.

Skinned and unskinned steaks. Removal of the blood is most important from the unskinned steaks.

The tail section is more bothersome than it is worth but can be used for fish cakes or fish pie.

There we have it. Eel cutlets plus the head and tail of the completed fish.

Thanks to the team at Boathouse Fisheries in St Mary's Bay for their help. If you are interested in learning more, we highly recommend signing up for one of their fish filleting courses, details of which can be found on the website at www.theboathousefisheries.co.uk

SEA SCHOOL

How to improve your casting skills

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Rod advice or where to buy,
email: seafishing@century.uk
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Words and images: John Holden

CHOOSE FREEDOM

When it comes to tackle, what you like, and what suits you, is a personal preference. Don't be a sheep, says John Holden

Soft as grease by modern standards, the old Daiwa Sand Storm still suits me fine

Tackle confuses so many beach fishermen. Deluged with opinion and hype, we often don't know which way to turn. One particularly persuasive message is that only the latest and greatest gear will do. Fishing with last season's rod? No monomag in the reel? And still using monofil line, for heaven's sake? The party has moved on, so grab your wallet and head for the tackle shop.

Years ago I stopped trying to keep up with the tackle world. I retreated because it had occurred to me that I'd become a sheep. I ran with the herd, heading in whatever direction the market prodded us. I always felt that something was missing, and occasionally I got fleeced.

Through my experiences in casting and fishing, I should have known better; but you know how it is when you're young and keen and on a serious quest for the Holy Grail - the ultimate kit that makes everything perfect. It takes a while to realise that it doesn't exist, and probably never will.

The modern era of tackle development came about because it was almost impossible to cast far enough. This is no longer true. So far as rods, reels and all the other bits in a beach fisherman's armoury go, almost anything made in the past fifty years will do a perfectly respectable job. There is a big but, though: you have to know what to do, which in the casting context as with fishing in general means getting a reasonable grip on a decent technique.

Skill sets us free. It's our ticket out of the flock and into the fields of free choice and self reliance. Rather than agonise over specifications and reviews, all we need to do is pick up the gear and try it. Although some tackle takes a bit of getting used to, generally speaking we soon know whether the project is worth pursuing. My rule of thumb is that if I like a new item and it suits me, it goes on the shortlist. Otherwise, time to move on regardless of how magical said item is reckoned to be.

Skill and confidence blow away the dense fog of doubt and hesitation that makes it so hard to know if we're doing the right thing when buying a new piece of gear. Specifically on the casting issue, a solid technique automatically tells you what works and what doesn't, and experience reveals your likes and dislikes. For example, no matter how technically advanced modern rods are, I do much better and feel happiest with something older and softer.

For what it's worth, my favourite gear includes a 1980's Conoflex 240T, an early Daiwa Sandstorm, the current Century Fireblade and a prehistoric Sportex bass rod from the glass fibre era. I use them because I like them and they do a great job. Other people prefer more advanced gear, and they are right as well. The point is we all deserve the freedom to make up our own minds. Learn the ropes, then pick what you like and ignore the critics.

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Words and images: Mike Thrussell

THE KIT YOU NEED FOR... BOAT SMOOTHOUND

Smoothhound have become a cult fish amongst sea anglers over the past two decades. Being caught in mainly shallow water this allows anglers to use light, balanced, tackle to maximise their high-octane fighting ability. Here's a tackle profile to suit most common boat fishing situations.

RODS

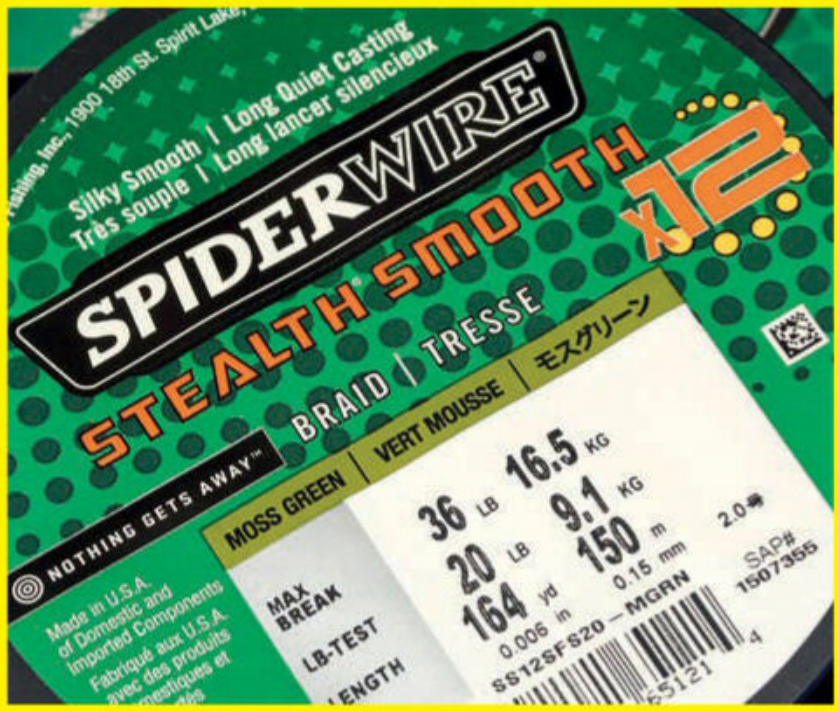
For standard downtide fishing, a 12/20lb rod between 7ft 6in and 8ft is the workhorse of your rod armoury. In deeper water situations use a 20/30lb class rod. In shallower water, and when uptide fishing, experienced anglers prefer to fish a European style Touch Tip rod between 10 and 11ft in length. These cast a long way, but also offer more versatility and better bite detection due to the soft tip when the smoothound are moody and bite-shy.

- **PENN SQUADRON II TOUCH TIP RRP £83.99**
- **DAIWA SEAHUNTER Z BOAT ROD 7ft 6in 12/20lb RRP £60**

REELS

A multiplier reel holding around 300yd of 30lb braid plus backing matches the 12/20 and 20/30lb rods perfectly. In shallower water with the 12/20 rod, you can use a multiplier with a line capacity of 300yd of 20lb braid and backing. The longer Touch Tip rods are best fished with a 5000 to 6000 sized fixed spool reel loaded with 30lb braid. The fixed spools offer easy casting away from the boat and have a faster retrieve rate that helps cope with smoothound that suddenly change direction creating slack line.

- **PENN BATTLE III 5000 FIXED SPOOL RRP £118.99**
- **DAIWA SL20SH RRP £90**



MAINLINE & LEADER

In very shallow water you can use 18lb mono mainline with a 40lb fluorocarbon or mono leader. In deeper water, and when uptide fishing, braid lines will give you a major advantage in reducing tide pressure on the line. They also require less lead weight to keep in contact with the seabed and offer excellent bite detection due to the non-stretch characteristic. 30/35lb braid is a good all-round compromise with a 60lb braid leader or, in shallow depths, a 40lb fluorocarbon leader which is less easily seen by the fish and has better abrasion resistance when in contact with a stony seabed.

- **AXIA X8 PE BRAID 30lb 300m RRP £19.99**
- **SPIDERWIRE STEALTH SMOOTH 36lb 300m RRP £36.99**

HOOK TRACE

Hooklengths need to be 30 to 40in of 30 to 40lb fluorocarbon. Mono is ok but is not as resistant to the rough rubbing gums of the smoothound, nor when in contact with snags and rocks. If the smoothound are picking up and dropping the bait, lengthen the hook length. If you get little indication on the rod tip but find the bait is repeatedly gone, shorten the hook length to get more direct contact on the take.

- **BERKLEY 30lb fluorocarbon 50m RRP £7.99**

RIGS

Use a simple sliding ledger with a Zip Slider boom sliding on the leader stopped by an 5mm bead. Then tie a size 2 rolling swivel on to the leader. The hook length is tied to the free eye of the swivel. This rig gives instant contact through the sliding ledger, leader and mainline direct to the rod tip as the fish takes the bait. When fishing over rougher ground attach your lead weight by a weak link. This can be a few twists of telephone wire, or use a short weaker link of line 25 per cent lighter than your main line. This allows the lead weight to break free but not lose a fish to a snag.

- **ZIP SLIDER RIG - ZIP SLIDER TYPE BOOMS X 10 RRP £5**

LEAD WEIGHTS

Keep lead weights as light as you can get away with. Ideally just heavy enough that when you lift the rod tip, the weight will drop back a few feet then hold again. You'll hit more bites if the fish can lift the weight up when it turns away in the tide as the lifting of the weight pulls the hook home before you strike. Round ball weights snag less over rougher ground, but over mixed ground bomb shaped weights are fine. Carry weights between 4oz and 12oz for general fishing, though some areas may require heavier leads.

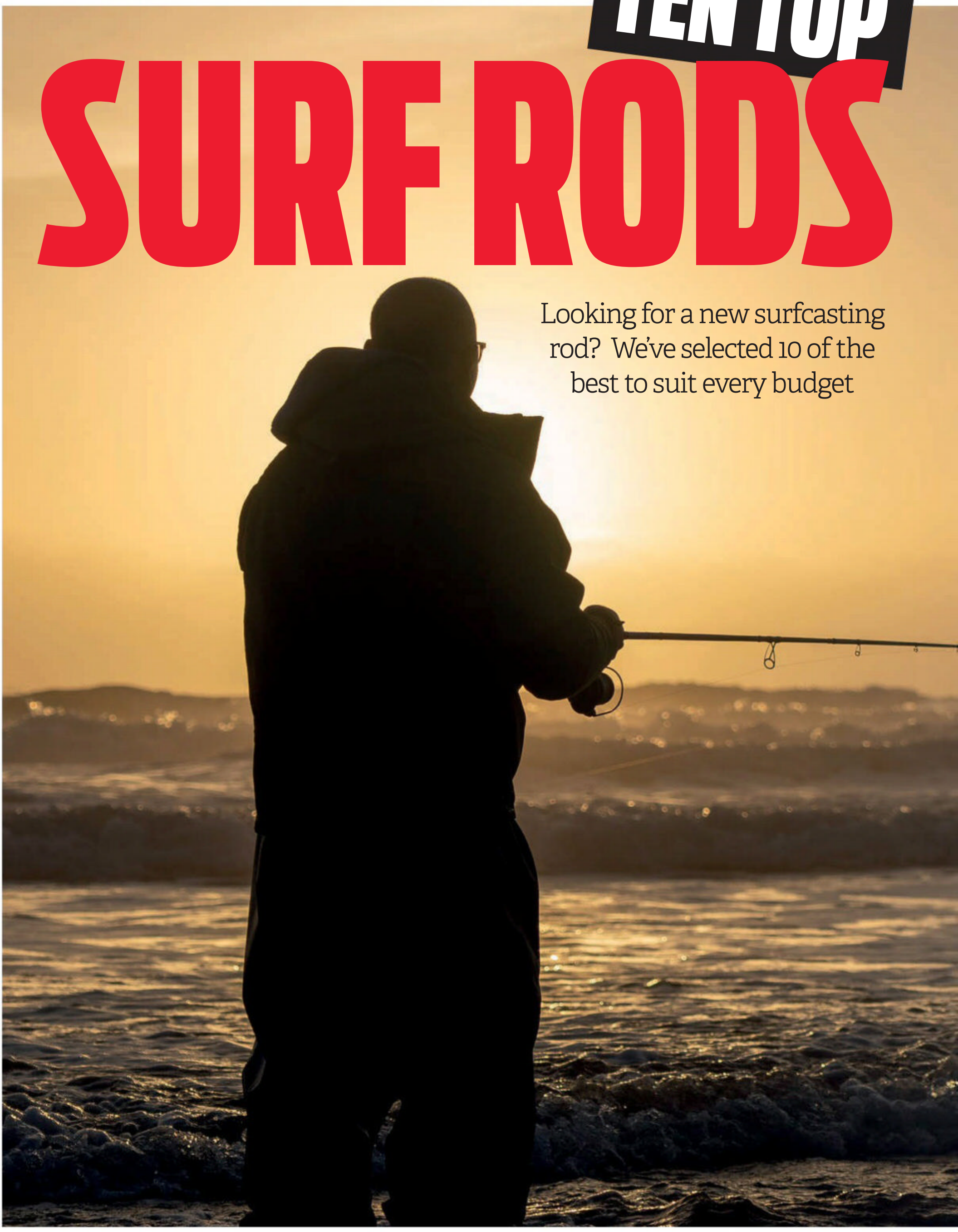
HOOKS

The most effective smoothound hook is a medium wire Viking pattern in size 4/0. These are heavy enough to land record smoothound but have a widish gape that allows the hook point to be positioned well clear of the bait for immediate contact with the jaw of the fish. Be wary of longer shank Aberdeen hooks. Smoothound will fight at an angle to the line in the tide and this can see the long shank act as a lever and pull the hook point out.

- **MUSTAD VIKING 79515 NP-BR RRP £8.50**
- **TRONIXPRO BIG DOG 11 size 4/0 RRP £2.75**

TEN TOP SURF RODS

Looking for a new surfcasting rod? We've selected 10 of the best to suit every budget



TRONIX AXIA BEACHCASTER

The Axia is ideal for the occasional angler or as an entry level rod for the beginner dipping their toe into surf fishing for the first time. Designed for fishing in general beach fishing situations on clean beaches and amongst mixed ground the Axia range has an easy to cast action and is lightweight with a sensitive tip for bite indication and rung with quality guides.

RRP £35.99

PRICE POINT BUDGET

SARACEN BEACHCASTER, FISHEAGLE

For a budget rod the Saracen Beachcaster boasts a powerful mid action that suits newcomers to surfcasting as well as those more experienced anglers on a budget. It can be used with either fixed spool or multipliers and at £79.99 is hard to beat for light use, those getting into the sport, or youngsters spending pocket money on their first rod.

RRP £79.99

PRICE POINT BUDGET

PENN SQUADRON II

Offering exceptional value for money, the PENN Squadron II Surf series feature modern sporting blank actions designed to achieve long distance casting. A powerful blank in combination with a great bite detection makes this rod hard to beat for value for money.

RRP £96.99

PRICE POINT BUDGET

PRICE POINT MID RANGE

PENN TIDAL 100-300G

The Tidal range was well reviewed recently in Sea Angler and for good reason. The range consists of four unique models that can be recognized by colour – all being different with respect to the power. The metallic silver PENN Tidal (50-200g) version is made for the lighter fishing styles like beach ledgering or fishing from a pier where no heavy tackle is required. The metallic green (100-225g) version and metallic blue (100-250g) versions are real all-round surfcasting rods that can be used under any kind of condition. The metallic red PENN Tidal (100-300g) version is for those looking for maximum power and distance.

■ RRP from £179.99

DAIWA SAND STORM

Not only is the Sand Storm's yellow design instantly recognisable but for a manufacturer with many rods in its range the Sand Storm still offers the greatest value for money and is one of Daiwa's most popular surf rods. The new Sand Storm range continues to look the part while the balance of a stiff carbon butt and compound taper tip ensures that its casting performance remains.

■ RRP from £170

PRICE POINT MID RANGE

CENTURY FIREBLADE

The Fireblade is best described as an entry level top end rod and has been specifically designed as such by the Century team at its UK factory. It combines performance, value for money, and capability in a rod that provides you with a high-performance tool at a price that won't break the bank. As a result, it's no wonder that the Fireblade is one of Century's most popular rods.

■ RRP £315

PRICE POINT MID RANGE

PRICE POINT TOP END

SONIK GRAVITY X5 HT

The Gravity X5 HT follows the design principles of the previous model offering the right balance of power, balance, and weight for an easy casting three-piece rod with enough power to cope with larger leads as well sitting well in heavier tides and swells. The specially designed hollow tip not only sits very well in the tide but has a very fast recovery allowing the angler to produce huge distances with a simple over-head cast.

■ £329.99

PRICE POINT TOP END

TRONIX COBRA GT-2

The Cobra series of rods have been designed to cross the bridge between continental style surfcasting rods and traditional British style rods. The GT-2 is a continental style two-piece incorporating the same solid tip that the GT three-piece rod features providing excellent bite indication but rigid enough to cope with the rigours of fishing in fast tides and strong surf conditions. The progressively powerful mid tip and butt section gives excellent casting performance and backbone for landing big fish from the shore.

■ RRP £389.99

ZZIPLEX M4 GT

Zziplex is a brand of rod that sea anglers aspire to own. With a long history of custom building rods in the UK to exacting specifications and with unwavering attention to detail Zziplex produces high performance blanks that deliver a world class casting and fishing experience. The M4 GT is an evolution of the EVO incorporating a glass tip and the result is a well-balanced, powerful and highly sensitive surf fishing rod. An excellent all-rounder the M4 GT is a popular model and a good choice for any angler wanting to splash out on a top of the range rod where performance and quality is the priority.

■ RRP from £469.99

PRICE POINT TOP END

TRONIX PRO COMPETITION MATCH GT 4.2M

If you're in the market for a rod that does it all, then this is the one. Designed to cover most beach fishing situations, the Match GT has plenty of power to cast weights right through its casting ratings. It's equally comfortable hauling big fish such as cod and rays or scratching around for bites when after whiting and flatfish. Constructed with the unique Nano Graphene Matrix material, this 40ton carbon from Mitsubishi is a hundred times stronger than steel of the same thickness. It gives the rod increased recovery, higher strength, and more sensitivity.

■ RRP from £479.99

PRICE POINT TOP END

FIRST LOOK

Your update on the latest gear arriving in the tackle shops

SHAKESPEARE SALT SAND SPIKE

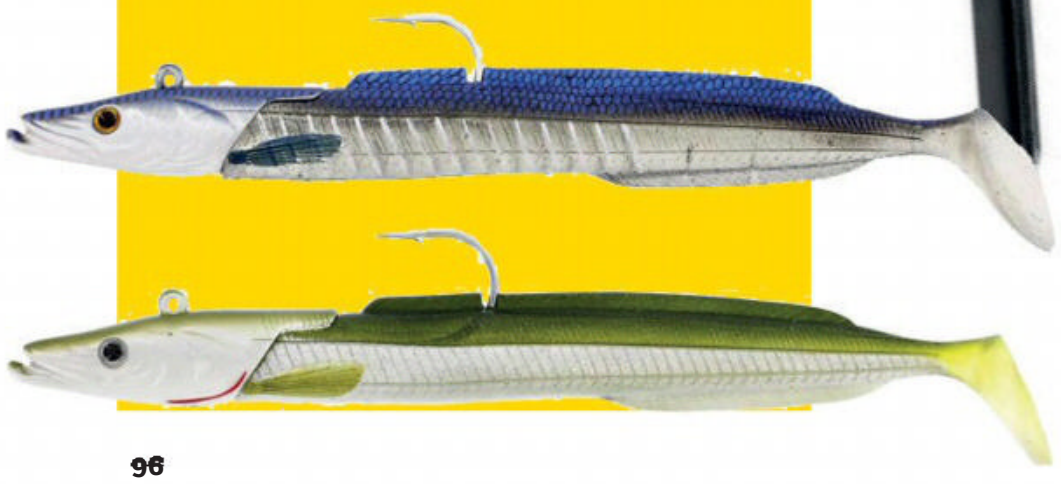
The Shakespeare Salt sand spike is a simple yet very effective way of holding a rod on a beach. It's also a great way to get your mainline up and out of the way of other beach users in the warmer and busier months of the year. This sand spike is saltwater resistant and very easy to set up. Shorter in length when compared to most other sand spikes on the market, the Shakespeare Salt sand spike is very stable once fixed into the ground. Simply place the butt of your rod in the cup and then rest the remaining part of the rod in the upper holder of the sand spike. The Shakespeare Salt sand spike also comes with a practical carry case.

- Saltwater Sand Spike
- Aluminium
- Colour: black
- Sturdy beach support
- Saltwater-resistant
- Secure
- Practical carry case
- RRP: £27.95
- Available from shakespeare-fishing.co.uk

WESTIN SANDY ANDY JIGGING LURE

The most realistic sand eel imitation 'ever made', this hand-painted lure will catch bass, cod, pollack, sea trout and and a range of other predators. The pre-moulded jig mounted with an ultra-sharp sea hook and soft, durable body allows you to replace tailpieces and prolong its life, while the range of colour goes from natural to acid house.

- Active 3D eyes
- Durable hand painted detailed colours
- Ultra-sharp and strong Japanese-style sea fishing hook
- Hooks: 1/0, 3/0, 4/0
- Optimized flexibility
- Life-like lure
- Package contains 1 head and 2 bodies
- RRP £9.99
- Available from rokmax.com



SHAKESPEARE SALT RUCKSACK

The Shakespeare Salt rucksack is made for sea anglers who are looking for a spacious and comfortable rucksack which will fit all the essentials needed for a day's fishing. The 210D fabric with PVC coating on the Salt rucksack is both strong and durable. This rucksack has a reinforced back side, padded straps and a clip that will ensure an easy and comfortable carry, even when fully loaded. Inside the main pocket there is a special storage compartment and there are two large pockets on each side of the rucksack with mesh inners. If you are looking for an affordable rucksack which is spacious and comfortable then the Shakespeare Salt rucksack would be a great option for you.

- 210D fabric with PVC coating
- Spacious and affordable
- Comfortable rucksack
- Carry all your essentials
- 2 Large side pockets with mesh pockets
- 1 large front pocket
- SW proof zippers
- Inside extra storage pocket
- reinforced back side
- Strong padded straps with clip
- RRP: £49.99
- Available from shakespeare-fishing.co.uk

RATING SYSTEM

Our testers and reviewers use their experience to evaluate the quality and functionality of tackle to provide independent, credible and authoritative advice for our readers. On some pages, you may see the following endorsements

SeaAngler EXPERT CHOICE

Tackle which our testers or reviewers recommend to our audience.

SeaAngler BEST BUY

Tackle we believe is the best when tested or reviewed against direct competitor products.

SeaAngler 5 STAR

Some products reviewed will be awarded a star rating ranging from 0-5.

SNOWBEE 10225 PRESTIGE G-XS SW SALTWATER FLY ROD

The Prestige G-XS Graphine range comprises three high performance, ultra-light weight and exceptionally modern, top of the range fly rods. Each rod is finished in a pearlescent electric blue, then fitted with two large SiC lined titanium stripper rings and hard chrome, saltwater resistant, high-lift snakes to an over-sized hayfork tip ring. The reel seat achieves the lightest possible weight from the CNC machined aluminium design and is anodised to provide a corrosion proof finish. The butt extensions are tipped with a high wearing rubber cork composition and there is a small keeper ring for those requiring one.

The 10225 is responsive, 9ft casting machine, designed for accuracy and expert presentation. Ideal for general purpose saltwater and predator fishing for the likes of bass, mullet or bonefish and jacks, using smaller flies and where finesse may be required.

- RRP £549
- Available from www.snowbee.co.uk

HART LEGBAG

Big, cumbersome, bags can be a nightmare if you're rock hopping for species with a lure rod. The Hart Legbag has been developed to keep your body and arms completely free when fishing in difficult places. This low-capacity bag is just big enough to carry your lure essentials for a few hours fishing. Designed to wrap around the anglers upper thigh, it has a waist strap and leg strap for comfort and to spread the weight. It acts a bit like a holster, giving you easy access to all of your lure fishing essentials. The bag is watertight, so it is ideal for fishing in the worst weather. It features a large pocket for bigger items like lure boxes and a s smaller pocket for a leader material and other smaller items. There are three attachment loops on the bag so you can attach tools. A reflective strip finished off the bag.

- RRP: £34.99
- For information: tronixfishing.com

Words and photography by DAVE LEWIS

SNAPPERS VERSUS SPHEROS

Dave Lewis pits one of Shimano's budget priced reels against the best Costa Rica can throw at it. Which came out on top?

As many of you will know, I have a long-standing working relationship with Shimano. This somewhat privileged position gives me the opportunity to use some of the finest fishing tackle manufactured today. While it is always a pleasure to use top end products, I have ensured that I familiarise myself with the company's entire product range. After all, how can I honestly recommend a rod or reel to someone if I have never used it myself?

Towards the end of last year I received one of the first Shimano Spheros SW8000HG reels that arrived in the UK. This was perfect timing as it coincided with the easing of covid travel restrictions which allowed me to use the reel extensively on two separate trips to Costa Rica. I loaded the reel with 275m of 15kg Power Pro, which has a diameter of 0.23mm. The actual spool capacity for the 8000-size reel is 275m of 0.37mm line, so I used sufficient monofilament backing to ensure the spool was correctly filled to capacity. My intention was to use this reel on what I classify as being a medium weight casting outfit when fishing off the Pacific coast of Central America.

BUILT FOR SALT

The SW of the model number indicates the reel has been built specifically for saltwater use. The HG confirms a high gear ratio, which at 5.6:1 was perfect when it was necessary to work lures quickly in order to induce a following roosterfish to strike. Most importantly, the 8000-size reel is rated at applying an impressive 13kg of drag, which is essential when it is necessary to stop a brute of a cubera snapper from reaching its lair amongst the rocks!

During these trips the reel was used extensively each day, casting a range of poppers and stickbaits for species that included roosterfish, cubera snapper, yellowfin tuna and various members of the trevally family. In total during those two weeks I fished 12 full days, during which I caught a lot of very nice hard-fighting fish. From day one I was genuinely impressed with the way the reel performed. The drag, I soon noted when hooked up to a 30lb plus tuna, was exceptionally smooth and responsive to the slightest of adjustments. All the time I had to keep reminding myself that I was using, at least in the Shimano range, a budget price big fish reel; the SW8000HG retails for just £164.99.

Consequently, I would have absolutely no hesitation recommending this reel to anyone either to use as their main reel for a trip, or to carry as a spare. Certainly, I have every intention of using my Spheros a lot during future trips.

The Spheros range, which includes models from 3000 to 20000, thus covering most saltwater applications, are available from all Shimano tackle retailers. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

- **SP8000SW**
- **Mono line capacity 14lb/345yd, 16lb/250yd, 20lb/185yd**
- **Weight 24.7oz**
- **Bearings 4+1**
- **Gear ratio 4.9:1**
- **Retrieve per crank 37in**
- **POWERPRO braid (lb/yd) 40/340, 50/265, 65/215**
- **Max drag (lb) 26**
- **RRP: £234.99**

Words and photography by JAMES T MADSEN

TOUGH AND TO THE POINT

There's no need to compromise on hook penetration or strength with Cox & Rawle's versatile Surf & Uptide hook pattern, explains James T Madsen

COX & RAWLE SURF AND UPTIDE

RRP: £2.50 (5-10 HOOKS PER PACK)

SeaAngler EXPERT CHOICE

CHANGING SEASONS

As the weather and water temperatures continue to rise, I'll be concentrating more of my efforts fishing from the open beaches in the Bristol Channel. We can catch a good mixture of different fish on our sandy beaches at this time of year. Numbers of flatfish and bass have already increased and we are starting to see better numbers of rays. Mid to late spring really can be a great time for fishing on the beaches around Somerset and in South Wales. It won't be long until we start catching good numbers of conger eels and smoothhounds from some of these venues too. Sometimes you really don't know what you are going to catch next and I want to keep my options open. At this time of year when fishing from the sand I'm looking for a smaller hook which can handle a bigger fish if one comes along. I want a strong hook but I don't want to sacrifice good hook penetration and start missing bites from smaller fish. For example, I may be targeting bass and flounder with worm baits on the beach at Burnham-on-sea, where there is also a really good chance of catching a big specimen thornback ray at this time of year.

VERSATILE HOOK

The Cox & Rawle Surf & Uptide really is a versatile hook. This hook pattern was originally thought up by Bob Cox and John Rawle, the original owners of the brand. These guys were charter skippers and both boat fishing pioneers who invented uptiding in

the shallow waters of the Essex coast and Thames Estuary. As the name would suggest, that was why this particular hook pattern was born. However, this is certainly more than just a good hook for uptiding; it's one that you will regularly see shore anglers using on the beach. The Surf & Uptide is a great hook for worm and fish baits alike. Made from a medium gauge of wire, along with a useful combination of a needle point and a micro barb, it allows for really good hook penetration. Add to that, a medium length hook shank, combined with a forged gape, this hook also offers some really good strength. The Surf & Uptide is available in a good range of different sizes as well, so that keeps your options open to target different species and styles of fishing.

The Surf & Uptide will handle big thornbacks as well as flounder or bass

HEAVIER FISHING

You will also find the Surf & Uptide in the larger sizes are very good hooks for targeting big fish over rough ground. One of the main attractions for anglers using the Surf & Uptide over rough ground is the fact these hooks can be bent out when snagged on the seabed. A good quality, medium gauge of wire ensures these hooks will bend and not snap. Big hooks which bend out can seriously cut down on heavy tackle losses and that is a massive plus point for anglers using this pattern. Another thing worth noting is the size of the eye on the Surf & Uptide, which is big enough to fit some larger diameters and strengths of monofilament when needed.

FULFILLING CONFIDENCE

It's all about confidence in my opinion when fishing. Like I said, I want a hook which can handle a good variety of different species, fish with both big and small mouths. I really do think the Surf & Uptide offers me the much-needed balance between good hook penetration and strength, especially when fishing at this time of year. A good range of different hook sizes means I can adapt my rigs depending on what fish species I'm primarily targeting, while feeling confident that I could land a bigger fish on a smaller hook. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

- Corrosion resistant finish
- Medium gauge wire
- Medium shank
- Forged bend
- Needle point
- Micro barb
- Straight eye
- Well suited to worm and fish baits

- Available in sizes:
  4, 2, 1, 1/0, 2/0 3/0, 4/0, 6/0

Words and photography by HENRY GILBEY

GET A WIGGLE ON

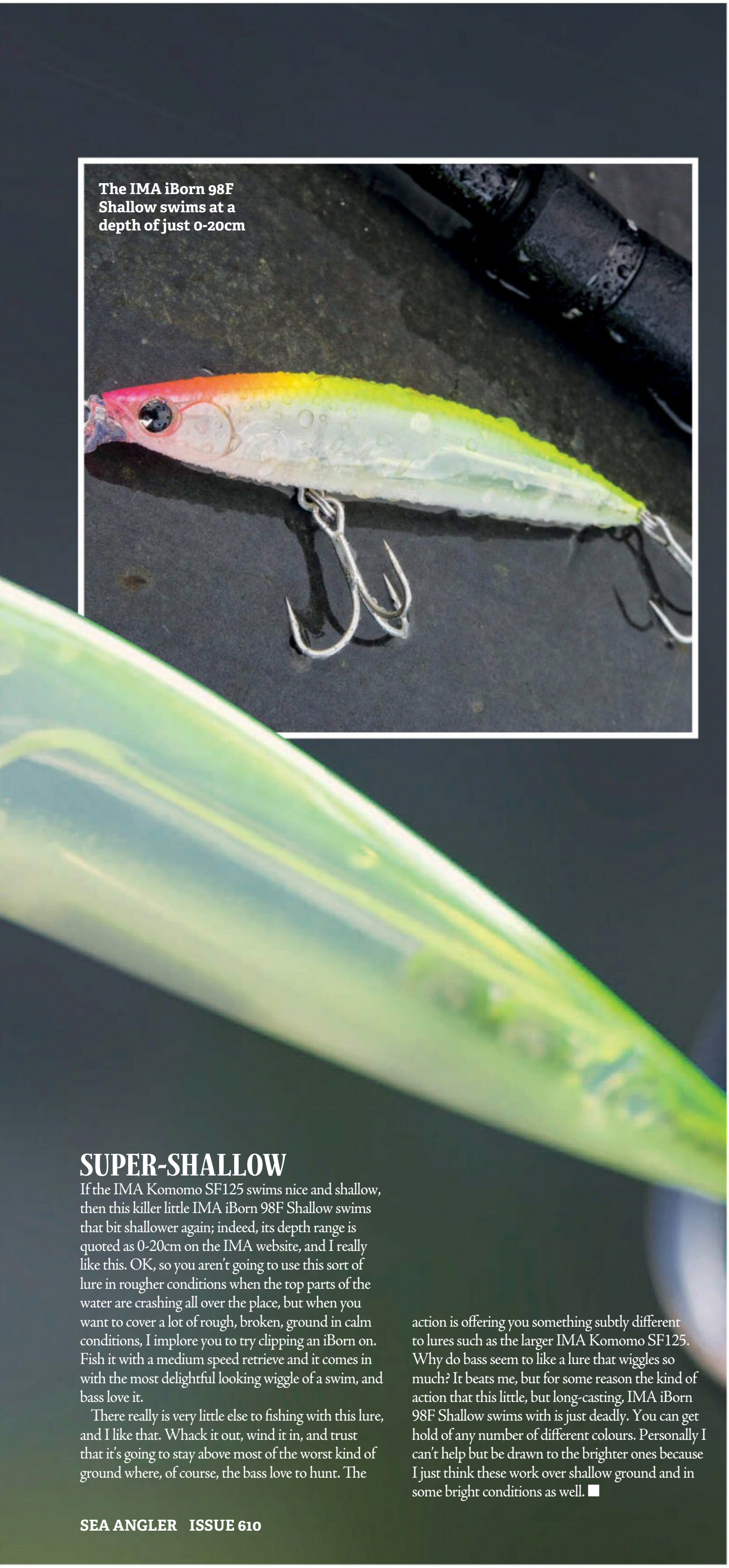
Henry Gilbey goes under the surface of the IMA iBorn 98F Shallow

Ever since I first came across the now legendary shallow diving IMA Komomo SF125 many moons ago, I have had a serious thing for long casting hard lures that can get me out there and then swim nice and shallow. In the main this is because so much of the bass ground we fish over is pretty shallow. However, I do also believe that as a species of fish, bass are very attuned to hitting lures that swim so shallow.

A while back I came across this fairly new to the market IMA iBorn 98F Shallow, a 98mm long lure that weighs 13g and flies like a proverbial missile. I have always liked IMA lures ever since I first started fishing with them for bass, and quite simply because they have always caught fish for me. This little IMA iBorn 98F Shallow is no different – it catches bass, plain and simple.

I do like hard lures around the 100-140mm length, so this little 98mm long iBorn suits both my preference for these sorts of lures, and, of course, the kinds of lure rods I tend to fish with. It comes rigged with a couple of size 4 treble hooks, but I have found that the lure fishes just as well if you go and replace the rear treble with a good-sized single hook. I crush all barbs on all my lure hooks if that is any help, and it doesn't affect my catch rates one bit.

It comes in a range of colours, these being two of the brightest



The IMA iBorn 98F Shallow swims at a depth of just 0-20cm

SUPER-SHALLOW

If the IMA Komomo SF125 swims nice and shallow, then this killer little IMA iBorn 98F Shallow swims that bit shallower again; indeed, its depth range is quoted as 0-20cm on the IMA website, and I really like this. OK, so you aren't going to use this sort of lure in rougher conditions when the top parts of the water are crashing all over the place, but when you want to cover a lot of rough, broken, ground in calm conditions, I implore you to try clipping an iBorn on. Fish it with a medium speed retrieve and it comes in with the most delightful looking wiggle of a swim, and bass love it.

There really is very little else to fishing with this lure, and I like that. Whack it out, wind it in, and trust that it's going to stay above most of the worst kind of ground where, of course, the bass love to hunt. The action is offering you something subtly different to lures such as the larger IMA Komomo SF125. Why do bass seem to like a lure that wiggles so much? It beats me, but for some reason the kind of action that this little, but long-casting, IMA iBorn 98F Shallow swims with is just deadly. You can get hold of any number of different colours. Personally I can't help but be drawn to the brighter ones because I just think these work over shallow ground and in some bright conditions as well. ■

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WIN SHAKESPEARE SURF PACKAGE

Sea Angler has teamed up with Shakespeare to offer readers the chance of winning this great surf fishing set-up worth £235

One lucky reader will win a three-piece 12ft 9in 4oz-80z Shakespeare Salt XT FS Surf Casting rod worth £119.99 paired with a Salt Surf Long Cast 70 fixed spool reel worth £59.99. But that's not all. The winner will also receive a fantastic Salt Quiver Bag worth £54.99 allowing you to carry up to eight rods or even a tripod and beach shelter.

It's the perfect set-up for surf and general shore fishing this summer. To be in with a chance to win, simply enter free online at

www.seaangler.co.uk/win

Terms and conditions: Entries close at 23.59 on 22/06/2022 and the winners will be drawn on 04/07/2022. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the close of entries. The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry is free. Open to residents of the UK aged over 18. Employees of Kelsey Media and their family members are not eligible to win. Only one entry permitted per person, no bulk entries will be accepted. There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferable. If any prize or product is lost or damaged during the course of delivery to the recipient, Kelsey Media will provide reasonable assistance in seeking to resolve the problem. However, it will not always be possible to obtain replacements for lost or damaged goods, and in that event, no financial compensation would be payable by Kelsey Media or their affiliates. We reserve the right to cancel the competition, if circumstances change that are beyond our control. By entering you agree to be bound by all the rules and agree that your surname and country may be published if you win.

BOAT STORE

The latest gear and technology for boat-owning anglers

GARMIN ECHOMAP UHD2 CHARTPLOTTERS

Five and seven inch models deliver Garmin's best-in-class sonar with built-in wireless networking and comes preloaded with Garmin Navionics+ cartography

Garmin have announced the launch of the ECHOMAP™ UHD2 chartplotter series with 500W of vivid, high-contrast scanning sonar power, all-new hardware with a sunlight readable display, and more. Offered in a new 5-inch as well as the popular 7-inch display, the ECHOMAP UHD2 plotters offer physical buttons for easy control and operation of functions every angler wants for a successful outing, including marking key waypoints or quickly toggling between different chart views. Plus, built-in Wi-Fi® enables seamless sharing of sonar and user data between two ECHOMAP UHD2 units onboard.

The ECHOMAP UHD2 series offers the best-in-class sonar, industry-leading mapping1 and fish-finding features that allow anglers to fish like a local. Valued as a budget-friendly option, this new series leverages the simplicity and accessibility of a full-button design while delivering all the necessary functions you would want on the water – from lightning-fast chart redraw and crisp sonar views to the new Garmin Navionics+ cartography. Packed with core mapping and sonar features, ECHOMAP UHD2 helps users pursue their next epic catch or explore inland and coastal waters with greater confidence.

WIRELESSLY SHARE SONAR AND DATA ACROSS DEVICES

Whether fishing with a friend or wanting the flexibility to add another chartplotter on board, built-in wireless networking allows anglers to stream sonar and share user data, such as waypoints and routes, between two ECHOMAP UHD2 units.

SONAR SUPPORT

When bought with an ECHOMAP UHD2, the GT20-TM transducer delivers a crisp view of structure, bait and fish – right from the plotter screen. For even greater clarity, users can add to their onboard system by purchasing a GT24UHD-TM transducer with Ultra-High Definition scanning sonar – CHIRP traditional and ClearVü – to target and identify a wider array of fish in vivid colour schemes.

MUST-HAVE MAPPING FOR BOATING AND FISHING

For advanced mapping features, daily chart updates and more, ECHOMAP UHD2 plotters come preloaded with the new Garmin Navionics+™ cartography. In addition to a host of detail-rich No. 1 marine mapping1 content at their fingertips, and the ability to track up to 5,000 waypoints, the ECHOMAP UHD2 series provides impressively fast and smooth chart redraw speeds to ensure anglers are poised and ready for their next cast. Users can also access the ActiveCaptain® communityfor local knowledge and information and seamlessly update and upgrade their charts through the ActiveCaptain app.

REFRESHED HARDWARE AND DESIGN

By incorporating style elements from legacy Garmin ECHOMAP UHD chartplotters, this UHD2 series debuts an attractive hardware redesign to serve the needs of the modern angler while maintaining a clean and classic keyed interface. To weather a range of conditions on the water, ECHOMAP UHD2 chartplotters feature a bright, sunlight-readable display, as well as Garmin's latest user interface and graphics for more intuitive handling and control.

■ Garmin.com

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FINGER ON THE PULSE

Looking to buy a boat? Why not ditch the diesel and go green with the world's first fully electric RIB?

This summer sees the launch of the Pulse 63, the world's first RIB with a fully integrated electric drive. Using cutting edge electric motor technology and using the same batteries from the fully electric Nissan Leaf the Pulse 63 is an exciting possibility for the inshore boat angler.

With a maximum speed of 22kt (giving you a range of approximately 25nm) the pulse motor provides the equivalent power to that of a 60HP petrol outboard engine but with the benefits of no direct carbon emissions, much lower fuel costs, more space and a quieter and more pleasant overall experience. The 46KW battery pack provides up to 400 volts of power to a RAD40 electric drive. As with electric road vehicles the Pulse benefits from impressive torque reaching top speed effortlessly and with ease. At 610kg the Pulse is heavier than the equivalent petrol- or diesel-powered RIB, which is largely down to the weight of the battery. While it's not completely silent, the noise of the quiet hum of the Pulse is a fraction of the equivalent noise from a standard outboard engine.

TECHNOLOGY

The 6.3m long RIB has a maximum range of 100nm (at 5kt) with the battery lasting up to eight hours on medium power making it a viable option for most all-day angling trips where the engines of most boats are only used for getting to and from port. The touchscreen interface gives you real time information on your battery capacity and how much further you can travel before recharging is necessary. The smart onboard monitoring system also checks the battery's health and alerts you when servicing is needed. The Pulse also has an onboard 'RADtag' system which allows different performance and geo limits for different users – useful if you want to limit the speed and distance for family members.

DESIGN

Designed for one to six passengers it will comfortably carry a maximum of four anglers with the centre console design giving you 360-degree access to the deck for fishing and boat handling. The deck is surprisingly stable and manoeuvring the Pulse is easy, particularly in shallow water as the drive can be raised to horizonal – a helpful feature for anglers fishing shallow water and launching or retrieving the RIB from beaches or slipways. For those keeping the pulse at a mooring in a marina recharging couldn't be easier – simply plug it in overnight for an eight-hour charge at any dockside power socket, or for just two hours where you can find a Combined Charging System.

The Pulse 63 has been designed and built in the UK by RS Sailing who have 25 years' experience in the boat building market and the leisure model offers anglers a clean, environmentally friendly, and stylish option to get afloat without the need to ever refill a diesel tank again. The price differential between the Pulse and equivalent petrol outboard powered RIB is similar to the difference in the car market. No doubt the technology for electric boats will move fast and electric marine engines will become ever more competitive. But if you want to get in now then the Pulse 63 is a great option for many boat anglers. To get a quote visit www.rselectricboats.com ■

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Words and pictures by SHAUN ANTELL

THE GREAT HOOK DILEMMA

CHANGING FROM TREBLES TO SINGLES

Will changing over to single hooks on your lures reduce your hook-up rate? BASS member Shaun Antell dives in to find out

Bass from last year on a soft plastic (Evobass Lance 150)

If you go on any of the bass lure fishing forums or Facebook groups you won't have to look far to find people asking about changing from treble hooks to single hooks. The answers are usually mixed. Some anglers will swear by trebles and that you miss out on fish with single hooks. Others will say they've not noticed any difference on hook-ups using singles.

I have mainly fished with soft plastics up until this year (other than a few bigger fish on surface plugs), so the idea of changing my trebles to singles wasn't really something I was too worried about.

The way my fishing has gone this year, I have spent more time, and caught more fish, off the surface, which has led to the odd struggle in unhooking; The problem is mainly the smaller ones.

FISH WELFARE

Because I prefer to return my fish (with the occasional one for the table) I want to put them back in the best shape possible. I felt that changing from treble hooks to single hooks on my plugs was the way to do this. It's worth pointing out that I have only done this with surface lures. I do own a few shallow divers, but I don't fish with them very often. I feel I can do anything I want to do with either surface lures or soft plastics, in the places that I mainly fish.

After some research, I felt that the Mustad Kajui hooks seemed to be popular and they looked strong. If I'm going to have just one hook to hold the fish then it needs to be solid. I got to work changing over the trebles on a few of my lures. To start with I focused on the smaller (90-100mm) lures as I felt the bigger bass engulf these more, often causing deep hooking.

Another point worth noting is that I did need to play around with hook sizes to get the weight right and to ensure the action is correct. On a new lure I think it's important to know the action before changing to singles.

CONFIDENCE IS KEY

During my first trial session I was struggling to catch anything until I was able to drift a Pugachev's Cobra into some structure after spotting a fin sticking out of the water. The bass had almost no choice but to hit the lure.

As expected in a run of current, the fish fought hard, so my hooks were being tested. Once the fish was landed I was impressed with

Pugachev's Cobra with two 1/0 Mustad Kaiju hooks

how well the it was hooked. I still needed the pliers to get the hook out, but it was a lot easier to remove than a set of trebles.

This was exactly what I was hoping for and it led me to change more of my lures to single hooks.

A BIT OF PERSPECTIVE

I knew that the capture of one fish on single hooks was only the beginning of my experiment and it would take a bit longer to decide what was right. On another trip, the IMA Salt Skimmer gave me food for thought. I was fishing an area that I know holds fish, but quite often I struggle to tempt them to take. I've found something like the skimmer, fished slow with pauses, can provoke a reaction; and this is exactly what happened.

However, after various hits on the lure I couldn't seem to get a hook-up on my single hooks. Now, compared to stumpier lures like the Zclaw and Pugachev Cobra, the skimmer did have quite a big gap between hooks. Bigger hooks would be an answer; however, I found the hooks wrapped around the lure so it was back to the drawing board.

OTHER SOLUTIONS

Other than changing from treble hooks to single hooks I also looked at keeping the trebles

IMA Chappy with single hooks

I knew that catching the first fish on the single hooks would be crucial. I would need to land it if I was going to have the confidence to keep going with singles

but crushing the barbs. I tried that with a couple of lures to see what happened. Interestingly, I tried this with an IMA Chappy and lost a good fish on treble hooks. I was able to get out the next day. This time the Chappy was armed with singles and I managed to hook into a decent fish once again. What happened this time? I landed it. So, despite this fish making me late home to look after the kids, all was well with the world. Single hooks were back in favour.

IMA CHAPPY

Currently single hooks have me sold. I think the chances of a hook-up are less than on a lure with treble hooks, but maybe not as much as I may have previously thought. Clearly, having three points per hook opposed to one is an advantage, but that doesn't really bother me. Especially on the smaller 90-100mm lures where two sets of trebles seem like overkill.

It seems that it's mainly the smaller fish that will struggle to get hooked on a single hook. Big bass have big mouths. Once they have mouthed that lure there is a pretty good chance of a hook-up. Maybe when bass aren't in such an aggressive mood then hook-ups could be a problem. But surely, this would be the same with weedless hooks and it's never bothered me or made me think not to use a weedless lure?

SINGLE HOOKS IN WEED

I did find an unexpected advantage of changing from treble hooks to single hooks; I snagged up less when fishing around weed. This

A selection of lures re-rigged with singles

has worked to my advantage when playing fish a couple of times where I'm certain a lure with treble hooks would have snagged and I'd probably have lost the fish. I have more confidence fishing closer to structure with single hooks. This is the sort of things that tip the scales in favour on single hooks for me.

There are lots of advantages for using single hooks in the areas I fish, so for now, that is how I will continue. If I don't feel a certain lure works well with single hooks, then I will either keep the trebles and crush the barbs or I won't use that lure at all. I'm just learning this game and will always try to keep an open mind to different ideas. ■

■ Keep up to date with BASS through its blog on www.ukbass.com or on Facebook or Twitter.

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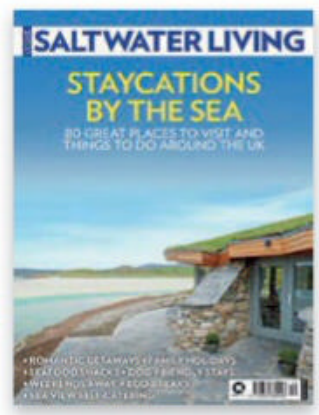

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2022 PENN® SEA LEAGUE

The latest results from Britain's biggest event for shore match anglers

1: YORKSHIRE AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY MATCH

66 fished

■ **Result**: 1st Mike Coates Hull, 2.675 kg Ray (6); 2nd Phil walker, Hornsea, 2.20kg ray (not registered); 3rd Simon Drayton, Gainsborough, 1.80Kg bass (4).

30: ANGLESEY MATCH ANGLERS OPEN

Pwllheli, 59 anglers

A Fantastic turnout of 59 top anglers from all over the country arrived at the famous Welsh match stretch, Pwllheli beach. Unfortunately, it was tough going for the majority of anglers with the long-settled spell and gin clear water leading up to the match making things very difficult. Distance casting certainly paid off and the effort was rewarded with some cracking bags for the conditions. The convincing winner on the night, showing his experience and continuing his great form this year, was Shane Russell.

■ **Result**: 1st, Shane Russell, Colwyn Bay, (5) with 21 fish for 856cm; 2nd Ben Price, Holyhead, with 14 fish for 526cm (4); 3rd overall on the night was John Jones, Llanfairfechan, with 6 fish for 270cm (3). Longest fish overall was a huss of 90cm caught by South Wales angler Lloyd Summers Bargoed (2)

30: SOUTHERN LEAGUE ROUND 4 OF 12 & OPEN

Friars Cliff, 73 anglers

Although there was a bit of weed hampering the anglers, there wasn't a shortage of fish; mainly dogs but a smattering of hounds, rays and plaice, which was good to see.

■ **Result**: With a superb bag of fish, the winner on the night was Dan Mogridge Portsmouth 21lb 15oz (7); 2nd Darren Bond, Lancing, 19lb 15oz (6); 3rd Anton James, Portsmouth, 18lb 3oz (5). Zone winners were Malcom Stote, Lymington (2), and Jeff Fisk, Bournemouth (2). Biggest fish of the evening was a 10lb 12oz smoothound landed by Anton James.

30: REELFUN LEAGUE AND OPEN SERIES, ROUND 1

Littleton, 38 anglers

■ **Result**: 1st Keith Warren, Clevedon, 10 fish, 3lb 12oz (3); 2nd Andy Madsen, 5 fish, 2lb 8oz (not registered); 3rd Tony Irwin, Bristol, 4 fish 2lb 4oz (2).

24: HORNSEA SAC LIFEBOAT OPEN

72 anglers

Bass took the top three positions in this charity competition in aid of the RNLI.

■ **Result**: 1st J Hawksley, 2.425kg (not registered), 2nd P Linguard, 1.575kg, (not registered); 3rd Mike Coates, Hull, 1.45kg (5). Heaviest total bag: 1st J Hawksley 5.35kg; 2nd W Davidson 4.70kg; 3rd George Smith Grimsby 3.725kg. Ladies' winner: K McLauchlam with a cod 0.550kg. Junior winner: N Smith 0.275kg. Pairs winners: W Davidson and W Leason, 5.30kg.

23-24: TRALEE BAY SAC COUNTY KERRY Ireland, Tag-A-Ray 79 anglers

Sadly, the North East has wreaked havoc on the fishing. The west of Tralee Bay fished best and thornbacks thankfully made an appearance in numbers. Mackerel and sandeel were the top baits over the weekend. Species caught were undulate, painted ray and thornback.

■ **Result**: Day 1: 1st Gordy Hardman, 3 rays; 2nd Ian Daly, 2 rays; 3rd Chris O'Sullivan, 1 ray. Day 2: 1st Noel Fogarty, 4 rays; 2nd Peter Bolger, 2 rays; 3rd Leonard foley, 1 ray. Results: 1st Ian Daly (not registered); 2nd Noel Fogarty Dublin (6); 3rd Gordy Hardman (not registered). Overall best fish Leonard Foley, 82cm undulate ray, 10lb 2oz (notregistered).

23: IPSWICH SEA ANGLERS SUMMER OPEN

East Lane 4-9pm, 44 anglers

The anglers met in Aldeburgh to fish the first Alby Clements memorial shield match. Greeted with a fairly strong NE wind and a choppy sea, not the best conditions but anglers like a challenge. There was a whole host of fish carded including, bass, dogs, whiting, pout, dab, flounder, eels, rockling and codling. Fishing from the top of the tide, and most of the ebb, section 1 was to the left of the lifeboat station and the rest were on the town beach.

■ **Result**: 1st Daniel Eagle, Leiston, 6 fish, 262 points (4); 2nd Mark Wilson, Lowestoft, 7 fish, 243 points (not registered); 3rd Richard Burt, Clacton, 7 fish 228 points (3). Zone winner: Rob Tuck, Holland on Sea (1). Top junior was Brayden Aldous Ipswich, 74 points. Biggest fish went to Rob Tuck with a bass of 48cm, worth 110 points.

23: WELSH JUNIOR FUNDRAISER

Pensarn Beach 40 anglers

Over £800 was raised to help promote junior angling in Wales, a fantastic effort, well done to all those taking part and Darren Jones for organising.

■ **Result**: 1st Ben Price Haydock, 4.09m (4); 2nd Shane Russell, Colwyn Bay, 3.62m (3); 3rd Joe Perry, Liverpool, 3.15m (2). Longest fish: Bill Lindfield, Greasby, 39cm bass (1). Zone winner: Phil House, Liverpool, 2.58m (1).

17: TRALEE BAY SAC COUNTY KERRY

27 Anglers

On a beach which can usually throw up anything it was the dogs who made a very welcome appearance from the start. They came in from all distances from 20m to max distance and all baits from maddies to sandeel.

■ **Result**: 1st David O'Sullivan, 8 fish, 377points (2); 2nd Darren Mulvihill, 6 fish, 300 points (not registered); 3rd Brahim Lucid, 4 fish, 186 points (not registered). Longest fish: Brahim Lucid, flounder; and Conor Galvin, flounder, 31cm, shared.

16: NORTH WALES TEAMS OF FIVE AND OPEN

Llandudno, 58 anglers

■ **Result**: 1st Ben Price, Holyhead, 27 fish, 908 points (5); 2nd Shane Russell, Colwyn Bay, 27 fish, 773 points (4); 3rd Steve Moffatt, Liverpool, 29 fish, 762 points (3); Biggest fish: Jimmy Price, Abergele, (2), bull huss of 96cm. Zone winners: Alan Price, Rhyl (2); Wayne McGilloway, Greenfield (2); Allan Hughes, Valley (2).

16: SEAHOUSES STREET SAC EASTER OPEN

130 anglers

■ **Result**: Heaviest flatfish, Michael Laycock, Workington, flounder 1lb 15.5oz (not registered). Heaviest bag and 2nd overall, Ben Shepherd, Maryport, 7 flounder, 1 plaice, 8lb10.5oz (12); 3rd Neil Cutler, Gateshead, 2 thornback rays, 8lb 9oz (11); 4th Nicky Robson, Wallsend, 1 thornback ray, 1 dogfish 5lb 7oz (10); 5th Alan Coumb, Kirkcaldy, 5lb 3oz (9).

16: SHOREHAM OPEN BEACH MATCH, BURRELLS ON SHOREHAM

46 anglers

With rereports of some decent plaice showing along the Shoreham beach, it wasn't a surprize they made up the bulk of the fish landed, along with gurnard, whiting and some small hound pups. The biggest plaice of 50cm was landed by Worthing angler Chris Snow, with several 30-40 cm fish making up the winning bags.

■ **Result**: 1st, Ian Bowell, Ipswich, 13 fish, 370 points (4); 2nd, Philip Lee, Sussex, 310 points (3); 3rd Chris Snow, Worthing, 296 points (2). Zone winner, Darren Newlands, Ryde, 270 points (1).

REMINDER Penn Sea League entries will only be accepted from the match organiser or officials of the club concerned at least eight weeks in advance. If results are not returned to Sea Angler within a month of the event, the event will be declared void for Penn points.

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Lewis Clark	Rochford	5
Mark Rogers	Maidstone	5
Paul Stevens	Worthing	5
Steve Potts	Gosforth	5
Stuart Cresswell	Ayr	5
Dave Lane	Weymouth	4
David O'Sullivan	Tralee	4
Garry Hughes	Colwyn Bay	4
Ian Bowell	Ipswich	4
Jason Banham	Ipswich	4
Jeff Fisk	Bournemouth	4
Kevin Martland	New Brighton	4
Mark Davies	Wrexham	4
Mark Griffen	Nantwich	4
Tom Ryder	Worthing	4
Tony (Bob) Roberts	Holyhead	4
Adam Johnson	South Shields	3
Andy Reeves	Sheerness	3
Carl Campion	Swansea	3
Dai Loder	Cwmbran	3
George Smith	Grimsby	3
Jimmy Connell	Glasgow	3
Julian French	Brighton	3
Keith Warren	Clevedon	3
Lee Smith	Hull	3
Neil Marsh	Herne Bay	3
Neil Wilkinson	Maryport	3
Rob Marshall	Taunton	3
Simon Pattinson	Rosyth	3
Steve Moffatt	Liverpool	3
Steve Smyth	Cardiff	3
Steven Bonner	Liverpool	3
Stuart Littlewood	Onchan	3

Only those with 3 or more points are listed

HOW IT WORKS

■ With £10,000 in tackle prizes spread over the two divisions, points, based on entries, are awarded to the top three, section winners and captors of the largest fish caught in each designated Penn match. Penn also awards a prize of a Spinfisher fixed-spool reel to the angler scoring the most points in matches shown in each issue. If there is a tie, the winner will be the angler whose total is from the greatest number of results and is then chosen on merit by the editor. An angler can win only one reel during the year. To win a prize you must be registered with the Penn Sea League – supply your name, address, phone and email. Send fixtures, results and league registration by email to Ian Bowell: ian.bowell@icloud.com

PENN MONTHLY WINNER

Penn Monthly Winner for April; Ben Price, Holyhead

READER OFFER

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This is the two piece 12ft 2-4oz version of the best selling Saracen beach rods which are sturdy, reliable and solid bits of kit.

- Designed to offer unbeatable value for money, ideal for the occasional angler or beginner.
- Suitable for general beach fishing but also capable of fishing in mixed ground and from offshore structures.
- Lightweight with good actions for detecting bites and for casting.
- A proper fishing rod that is an excellent stepping stone to a more advanced setup.

FISHEAGLE Q8 8000 SURF REEL

- Sturdy pre-loaded fixed spool reel the 8000 is ideal for beachcasters and surf rods.
- Adjustable front drag
- Preloaded with quality mono
- Ball bearing
- Sure grip handle

FISHEAGLE RIG WALLET + 10 BAIT RIGS

Superb quality selection of bait rigs in a velcro closure rig wallet to keep them safe and tidy. Selected specifically to offer a proven set of fish catchers the selection includes two each of some of the top bait rigs packed in individual zip-sealed plastic wallets.

Rigs Supplied

- 2 x 2 Hook Flapper rig - 1/0 hook 35lb
- 2 x 2 Hook Pennell Pulley rig - 4/0 hook 40lb
- 2 x 3 Hook Flapper rig - 2 hook 25lb
- 2 x Bomber rig - 1/0 hook 25lb
- 2 x Clipped Distance rig - 2/0 35lb

NG SPECIAL

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FISHEAGLE SARACEN MACKEREL ROD
If you're fishing off piers and rocks you need a rod to get your baits out there. This two-piece 11ft Saracen Mackerel rod is perfect for throwing feather rigs to the horizon or chucking a float out into gullies and bays.

Features:
- Screw winch reel seat
- Spigot joints
- Glazed tip
- Cloth bag

FISHEAGLE Q8 SURF REEL
The 6000 is perfect for pairing with your pier/mackerel/bass rod. The 8000 is ideal for beachcasters and surf rods.
- Adjustable Front drag
- Preloaded with quality mono
- Ball bearing
- Sure grip handle

FISHEAGLE RIG WALLET
Superb quality selection of feather rigs in a velcro closure rig wallet to keep them safe and tidy.
- 2 x 4 Hook Super Daylite rig
- 2 x 6 Hook Tinsel Flasha rig
- 2 x 4 Hook Reflector rig
- 2 x 3 Hook Hokkai Tempter rig
- 2 x 3 Hook Mackerel rig

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A sturdy all round 8ft two-piece rod that is happy chucking everything from feathers and wedges to tobies and bubble floats.
- Lined guides
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- Casts 20-50g
- Cloth bag

FISHEAGLE Q8 SPINNING REEL
Sturdy Pre-Loaded Fixed Spool Reel ideal for all round angling for Trout, Perch, Pike.
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- Preloaded with quality mono
- Ball bearing
- Sure grip handle

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Words by
and Photography by
IAN BOWELL

The late Ian Golds and the SAMF match team

SEA ANGLERS MATCH FEDERATION

Ian Bowell explains what SAMF is, what it means to him and what it contributes to the world of a sea angler.

The Sea Anglers Match Federation (SAMF) was formed in 1980, with several well-known match anglers at the forefront: Alan Yates, Ian Golds, Chris Clark to name but a few. The principal officers running the organisation for a great many years were John Amery (Chair), Andy Steel (Secretary) and Mary Steel (Treasurer). In recent years Mike Watts, Tony Thomas and I have taken the lead roles, although Andy is still in the background providing guidance and support where needed. The current SAMF committee includes a number of well-known match anglers from around the country such as Andrew Dugdale (Isle of Man), Bob Gascoigne (North-East) and Bill Lindfield (Merseyside).

SAMF has a constitution, risk statements, match rules and insurance – all things you would expect from an established organisation. At the forefront of match angling, SAMF has developed a comprehensive catch and release rule set and actively promotes catch and release competitions with specific rules for the handling of fish. To widen its appeal, and to gain new members, we've introduced a specimen competition which allows the roving angler, either on a pleasure session or a match, to be involved and, as a member, take advantage of our insurance umbrella which covers all members not just fishing SAMF matches.

Our objectives include: to arrange fishing competitions for members to enjoy; provide open matches which promote the sport; provide opportunities to support charitable and community activities; encourage and develop the skills of sea angling.

Rory Eastlake and Chris Clark

Joeri Deverish, Belgium captain

Ian Golds, Arthur Van Tienen, Ian Bowell and and Joeri.

Bob Gascoigne

During the 1980s and 1990s SAMF was at the forefront of developing large, pegged matches, with qualification for a national final, The Masters, run over two days at a venue which rotated around the country; a model which the current two-day matches were founded on. Any angler can be a member of SAMF, its membership stretches across the UK, Holland and Belgium. We actively encourage male, female and junior anglers and encourage all clubs and match organisers to allow juniors to fish for free, while ensuring the safeguarding of the child at all times.

INTERNATIONAL

As match angling across Europe increased in popularity, along with the success of UK teams at world championships in the 1990s, a challenge match was developed. The first of its kind was SAMF versus the Belgium Federation and involved 20 teams fishing over two days, alternating between Belgium and the UK. This concept has now expanded, with SAMF fishing separate challenge matches against the Scottish Federation, the UK Combined Armed Forces (CAF), along with what is our premier challenge match, SAMF versus Belgium and Holland, a three-way international competition held in Holland, Belgium and the UK on a rotational basis. This competition was renamed the Alan Gilbert Memorial in honour of Alan who gave so much to the SAMF match teams over many years. The AGM, as the match is affectionately called, is held in such high esteem by our European friends that both the Dutch and Belgium federations use it as part of their selection process for their world teams, so it really is a great test of UK anglers' ability. Although the away venues are not too far away, 70 miles as the crow flies, the type of fishing can be markedly different, forcing UK anglers to learn and adapt. This is an excellent stepping stone and opportunity for anglers to demonstrate their skills and to learn continental styles of fishing which are required if the individual has ambition to tackle matches which demand use of lighter lines and fine hook lengths, far away from the popular styles used in the UK, such as the Yuki Master series, Home Internationals and World Championships. SAMF has the honour of being allowed to select a team of to take part in the World Club Championships, wining a number of team medals over the years. Most of those anglers have gone onto represent their country on either the Home Internationals or World Championships stage.

BOUNCING BACK STRONGER

As Covid ravaged our world and claimed so many lives, we looked for small comforts to help get us through the dark days of lockdown. Credit to Angling Trust, who got on the front foot and allowing us to get back fishing, and boy what a resurgence. SAMF were proud to assist and support a return to angling, a return which has seen a massive increase in people taking up match fishing and angling in general. Recreational sea angling is now a significant contribution to our UK economy and it's estimated our UK Masters held in Hythe in March brought £40,000 to the local economy.

Expanding our involvement in match fishing over the last few years SAMF has taken on the organisation of the National Sea League involving leagues run around the country culminating in the national final with up to 40 teams taking part. As from this year SAMF now administer the Penn Sea League on behalf of Sea Angler and PENN, with a profile of 750 anglers registered for the league.

Personally, SAMF has given me so much over the years, so now it's my time to put something back. All our work is voluntary and I feel privileged to be able to call on a long list of volunteer match organisers – well known anglers and those involved in the angling industry – for support, although sometimes the work can get a bit much! When I see Saul Page holding aloft the Master's trophy, renamed the Ian Gold's Masters in memory of one of the best match anglers ever to walk on a beach, it makes it worth it. We are always looking for new members, so if you're interested then please get in touch with either Tony Thomas thomasamt@btinternet.com, or me ian.bowell@samf-uk.co.uk or visit our Facebook page and download the membership form. It cost £20 per year to join, the price of a few worms, which includes the specimen competition, team competition, match packs for organisers/individuals, safety guidance and insurance. ■

WHAT'S ON

Your at-a-glance match events planner

● = Penn Sea League

JUNE

● **5:** Tralee Bay SAC County Kerry, Ireland, Cappalough 3-7pm Chris O'Sullivan, atlantictackle@hotmail.com

● **5:** Gerry's Sea League, Stanha. Pre book only £20 Fishing 1.15-5.15pm, book on at carpark from 11.30. Contact Hutch 07472249294 or Tony 07702229015

● **5:** Reelfun league and open series, round 4, Littleton 9.45-13.45pm, catch and release, 1 rod, 3 hooks no bait bans, £50 for the seven matches, best 5 from 7, pay-out top 12, biggest flat, round and biggest bag, or £20 per match pre-book only contact Steve at Reelfun 01275-848652

PENN PLUS MATCH
Ramsey Week IOM
23-25 June
Andrew Dugdale
manxman22@gmail.com
07624490312

● **11:** Southern League round 6 of 12 & open, Hayling, 7pm-midnight, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **12:** Anglers Corner 2022 West Wales National Sea League, North Channel, Bury Port 9-1pm. Meet Car Park by Shoreline Caravan Park 7am, pegged, zoned, length match, 1 rod, 3 Hooks. £20 entry, 100% cash paid Back, prizes for 1st, 2nd 3rdoverall, zone winners and longest fish. Teams of 5 Entry is Free, no money paid in or out, just bragging rights and a Trophy to keep for the year as West Wales Champions. Christopher Isaac; 07880311014 or email c19aac@gmail.com

● **12:** Reelfun league and open series, round 5, Littleton 4.45-8.45pm, catch and release, 1 rod, 3 hooks no bait bans, £50 for the seven matches, best 5 from 7, pay-out top 12, biggest flat, round and biggest bag, or £20 per match pre-book only contact Steve at Reelfun 01275-848652

● **12:** Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers, round 4 Riverside, Max 50 Pegs, £15 Adults £5 Juniors. Contact Mike on 07933 003985 or Chris on 07872944807

● **18:** Samalite Chesil League round 6 of 12, Chesil Centre, 6.30-11.30pm, best nine results from 12, pre-book only, Dave Lane 07977 132951, lanedc@talktalk.net

● **19:** North West Association of Sea Anglers, Otterspool. Fishing 11.30 -16.30pm. Book on 09.30-10.30am at Jericho Lane. Pre-book essential 07572593272.

● **25**: Ipswich Sea Anglers summer open, Frinton 7-12 Midnight £20 entry, SAMF weight measure, except whiting and bass 27cm, everything else over 18cm. Pre-book only Matt LF 07810564399 or Rob Tuck 07855848967

● **26:** North Wales Teams of five and open; Talacre 2-6pm. Pre-book with Ben Price 07393201284, benplumb1992@gmail.com

● **26:** Welsh FSA East Region Shore League round 4 & open, Cold Knap & Porthkerry, Steve Chadwick, 07777 689289.

● **26:** Reelfun league and open series, round 6, Littleton 4.45-845pm, catch and release, 1 rod, 3 hooks no bait bans, £50 for the seven matches, best 5 from 7, pay-out top 12, biggest flat, round and biggest bag, or £20 per match pre-book only contact Steve at Reelfun 01275-848652

JULY

● **3:** Reelfun league and open series, round 7, Littleton 9-1pm, catch and release, 1 rod, 3 hooks no bait bans, £50 for the seven matches, best 5 from 7, pay-out top 12, biggest flat, round and biggest bag, or £20 per match pre-book only contact Steve at Reelfun 01275-848652

● **9:** Colwyn Bay Victoria Sea Anglers Summer series 2nd leg Pwhelli main beach 1-6pm Darren Jones 07595375663

● **9:** Gerry's Sea League, Knot End Beach, Pre book only £20 limited pegs. Fishing 12.30-4.30pm book on at carpark 11am. Contact hutch 07472249294 or Tony 07702229015

● **9:** Hookers Baits Summer open, Five Bar Gate, 6-930pm, draw 2-5pm, £20 entry, Pre-book from Hookers Baits, match in aid of Brian House Children's Hospice. Contact Jay; mantamaintenance@outlook.com for more information

● **9:** Southern League round 7 of 12 & open, Lee on Solent/Stokes, 6pm-11pm, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **10:** Anglers Corner 2022 West Wales National Sea League, Llangennith Beach 8-12pm. Meet Hillend Car Park 6.30am, pegged, zoned, length match, 1 rod, 3 Hooks. £20 entry, 100% cash paid Back, prizes for 1st, 2nd 3rdoverall, zone winners and longest fish. Teams of 5 Entry is Free, no money paid in or out, just bragging rights and a Trophy to keep for the year as West Wales Champions. Christopher Isaac; 07880311014 or email c19aac@gmail.com

● **10** Penarth Holiday open, Penarth, Bob Galley 02920 706995.

Got an event? Contact ian.bowell@icloud.com

LONDON BRIDGE *

TIDES FOR JUEN & JULY 2022

JUNE

1	WED	03.42	6.95	15.58	6.70
2	THU	04.18	6.86	16.30	6.59
3	FRI	04.51	6.68	17.02	6.43
4	SAT	05.26	6.49	17.35	6.27
5	SUN	06.02	6.32	18.11	6.10
6	MON	06.42	6.17	18.52	5.95
7	TUE	07.30	6.02	19.42	5.80
8	WED	08.27	5.93	20.43	5.72
9	THU	09.37	5.95	22.03	5.81
10	FRI	10.46	6.15	23.15	6.15
11	SAT	11.48	6.39	****	***
12	SUN	00.16	6.48	12.46	6.61
13	MON	01.11	6.79	13.41	6.77
14	TUE	02.03	7.04	14.32	6.86
15	WED	02.53	7.20	15.21	6.88
16	THU	03.43	7.28	16.10	6.85
17	FRI	04.33	7.28	16.58	6.77
18	SAT	05.25	7.19	17.46	6.65
19	SUN	06.17	7.01	18.36	6.50
20	MON	07.12	6.80	19.29	6.35
21	TUE	08.09	6.60	20.28	6.25
22	WED	09.08	6.45	21.30	6.20
23	THU	10.08	6.34	22.33	6.20
24	FRI	11.10	6.26	23.34	6.23
25	SAT	****	***	12.12	6.25
26	SUN	00.32	6.31	13.06	6.30
27	MON	01.22	6.45	13.51	6.39
28	TUE	02.06	6.59	14.30	6.49
29	WED	02.47	6.70	15.07	6.56
30	THU	03.26	6.74	15.42	6.59

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JULY

1	FRI	04.03	6.72	16.18	6.56
2	SAT	04.39	6.66	16.51	6.51
3	SUN	05.13	6.60	17.25	6.44
4	MON	05.48	6.53	18.00	6.35
5	TUE	6.26	6.43	18.36	6.24
6	WED	7.07	6.29	19.17	6.14
7	THU	07.54	6.15	20.06	6.06
8	FRI	08.51	6.04	21.06	6.02
9	SAT	10.00	6.03	22.27	6.10
10	SUN	11.12	6.15	23.40	6.34
11	MON	***	***	12.18	6.34
12	TUE	00.45	6.64	13.21	6.54
13	WED	01.45	6.90	14.18	6.70
14	THU	02.42	7.11	15.12	6.81
15	FRI	03.36	7.25	16.03	6.90
16	SAT	04.28	7.34	16.51	6.95
17	SUN	05.18	7.32	17.36	6.93
18	MON	06.06	7.17	18.21	6.83
19	TUE	06.53	6.93	19.05	6.68
20	WED	07.41	6.65	19.52	6.49
21	THU	08.30	6.36	20.44	6.28
22	FRI	09.21	6.11	21.41	6.10
23	SAT	10.17	5.92	22.42	5.98
24	SUN	11.20	5.83	23.48	6.00
25	MON	***	***	12.29	5.94
26	TUE	00.51	6.17	13.25	6.16
27	WED	01.45	6.40	14.12	6.38
28	THU	02.31	6.58	14.52	6.53
29	FRI	03.12	6.68	15.30	6.62
30	SAT	03.49	6.73	16.05	6.68
31	SUN	04.24	6.78	16.39	6.71

*** TIDAL VARIATIONS FROM LONDON**

Wick	-2 29	Swansea	+4 42
Lossiemouth	-2 00	Milford Haven	+4 37
Aberdeen	-0 18	Fishguard	+5 44
Stonehaven	-0 08	Aberystwyth	-6 11
Cockenzie	+0 47	Barmouth	-5 45
Berwick	+0 54	Holyhead	-3 28
Blyth	+1 46	Menai Bridge	-3 08
North Shields	+1 47	Colwyn Bay	-2 47
Hartlepool	+1 59	Southport	-2 55
Whitby	+2 20	Blackpool	-2 50
Scarborough	+2 30	Morecambe	-2 33
Filey Bay	+2 45	Barrow (Ramsden)	-2 28
Bridlington	+2 58	Whitehaven	-2 30
Skegness	+4 29	Kirkcudbright Bay	-2 25
Hunstanton	+4 44	Girvan	-1 51
Cromer	+4 56	Ayr	-1 44
Lowestoft	-4 23	Lamlash	-1 45
Aldeburgh	-2 53	Greenock	-1 19
Felixstowe pier	-2 23	Oban	+4 12
Clacton	-2 00	Gairloch	+5 16
Southend-on-Sea	-1 22	Ullapool	+5 36
Herne Bay	-1 24	Belfast	-2 47
Margate	-1 52	Douglas	-2 44
Deal	-2 38		
Dover	-2 53	**IRELAND**	
Dungeness	-3 05	Dun Laoghaire	-2 09
Eastbourne	-2 48	Arklow	-4 41
Newhaven	-2 47	Rosslare harbour	+4 39
Brighton	-2 51	Baginbun Head	+3 53
Worthing	-2 36	Ballycotton	+3 45
Portsmouth	-2 29	Courtmacsherry	+3 32
Ryde	-2 29	Baltimore	+3 35
Southampton *	-2 53	Bantry	+3 15
Poole (Entrance) *	-5 09	Fenit pier	+3 13
Bournemouth *	-5 09	Kilrush	+4 02
Swanage *	-5 19	Galway	+3 36
Portland	+4 57	Clifden Bay	+3 41
Torquay	+4 40	Westport Bay	+3 57
Dartmouth	+4 25	Sligo harbour	+4 25
Plymouth	+4 05	Killybegs	+4 21
Fowey	+3 53	Rathmullan	+4 43
Falmouth	+3 30		
Newquay	+3 32	**NORTHERN IRELAND**	
Padstow	+3 45	Belfast	-2 47
Barnstaple	+4 30	Portrush	+5 48
Weston-super-Mare	+5 05	Red Bay	-2 41
Cardiff (Penarth)	+5 15	Carrickfergus	-2 42
Barry	+5 08		

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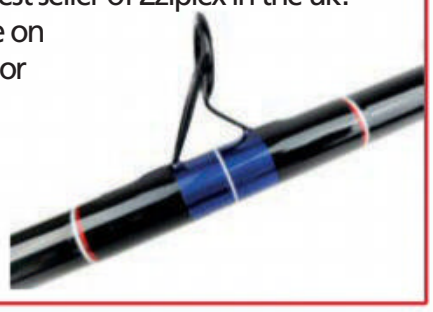

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NOMURA KANJI 10FT…30-70GMS OR 70-130GMS EITHER £69.99
NOMURA KANJI 11FT…70-130GMS EITHER £69.99
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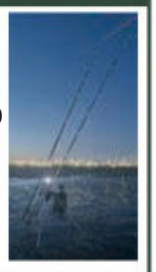

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